

CONVENTION ON CLUSTER MUNITIONS ARTICLE 4 DEADLINE: 1 NOVEMBER 2023
NOT ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE

KEY DATA

CLUSTER MUNITION
CONTAMINATION: HEAVY

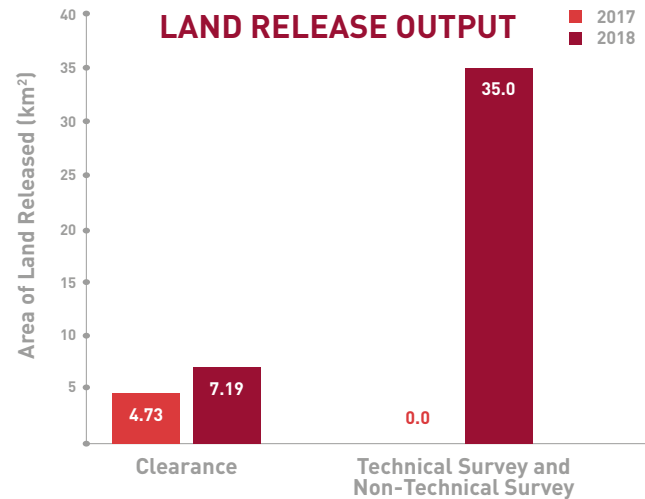
191 KM²

SUBMUNITION
CLEARANCE IN 2018

7.19 KM²

SUBMUNITIONS
DESTROYED IN 2018

3,647



KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Cluster munition remnant (CMR) survey and clearance output rose in 2018 despite limited resources and capacity. The Regional Mine Action Centre for the South (RMAC-S) adopted the Cluster Munition Remnant Survey (CMRS) methodology and drafted a national standard awaiting approval by the Directorate for Mine Action (DMA).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Iraq should mobilise more resources and national capacity for survey and clearance of CMR contamination.
- The Ministry of Interior should report comprehensively on the funding, capacity, deployment, and results of Civil Defence mine action operations.
- The DMA should adopt the CMRS methodology as a national standard.
- The DMA should adopt electronic reporting by operators as standard practice; if necessary, through an exception to Iraqi law.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2018)	Performance commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CLUSTER MUNITION REMNANT (20% of overall score)	5	Progress in survey in the most affected southern governorates is better defining the extent of contamination but progress is limited owing to the low level of funding and small capacity acting on cluster munitions.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	6	The DMA is responsible for planning, tasking, and coordinating mine action but is overshadowed by powerful government ministries.
GENDER (10% of overall score)	5	Gender considerations do not feature in national plans but international operators and their national partners employ women in a wide range of roles, but subject to cultural sensitivities in different areas.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	5	Information relating to cluster munitions is improving in accuracy and accessibility.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	5	Planning and tasking for survey and clearance of cluster munitions affected areas through RMAC-S benefitted from good coordination with operators.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (20% of overall score)	6	RMAC-S, whose area covers nearly 90% of CMR contamination, has embraced CMRS/technical survey.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 4 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	5	Productivity and numbers of items destroyed rose but the scale of contamination and limited resources ensures Iraq will need an extension to its CCM Article 4 deadline.
Average score	5.3	Overall programme performance: AVERAGE

CLUSTER MUNITION SURVEY AND CLEARANCE CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT

- Higher Council of Mine Action
- Department of Mine Action
- Iraq Kurdistan Mine Action Agency

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Ministry of Defence
- Ministry of Interior (Civil Defence)
- Commercial operators Al Khebra Al Fania and Ta'az Demining Company

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- Danish Demining Group (DDG)
- Humanity and Inclusion (HI)
- Mines Advisory Group (MAG)
- Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)
- Swiss Foundation for Mine Action (FSD)

OTHER ACTORS

- United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)

UNDERSTANDING OF CMR CONTAMINATION

Iraq estimated CMR contamination at the end of 2018 at more than 190km² (see Table 1), one of the four worst-affected countries in the world. The nearly 50% increase over the estimate reported a year earlier is attributable to errors in the data presented previously. The DMA believes the estimate may increase as a result of continuing survey and the discovery of previously unrecorded contamination.¹

The Kurdish Region of Iraq (KRI) also has some CMR but the extent is not known. Iraq's Kurdish region authorities do not report the presence of any confirmed CMR-contaminated areas, but Mines Advisory Group (MAG) continues to clear submunitions in the KRI and has reported some areas still need to be surveyed to determine the extent of contamination.²

NPA's survey also identified 18.6km² of new contamination in the four southern governorates in 2018, 16.8km² of it in Muthanna. Those results combined with its experience finding significant contamination beyond the perimeter of polygons tasked for clearance ensure the extent of contamination will most likely increase significantly as survey progresses.³

Iraq's contamination dates back to the Gulf War of 1991 and the United States (US)-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 and followed the path of allied forces advance from the south to Baghdad. Coalition aircraft also struck Iraqi army positions in the northern governorate of Kirkuk. The areas most heavily affected are the southern governorates of Muthanna, Thi Qar and Basrah, which account for nearly 90% of Iraq's CMR contamination and where the most commonly found items are BLU-63 and BLU-97 submunitions. Other CMR found in the area include BLU-61 and M42 submunitions.⁴

Table 1: CMR contamination in Federal Iraq (at end 2018)⁵

Province	CHAs	CHA area (m ²)
Basrah	N/R	27,851,470
Diyala	N/R	20,076
Kerbala	N/R	2,107,444
Kirkuk	N/R	3,418,306
Missan	N/R	1,353,148
Muthanna	N/R	101,647,074
Najaf	N/R	5,321,629
Thi Qar	N/R	45,433,774
Qadisiya	N/R	3,966,337
Total		191,119,258

CHAs = Confirmed hazardous areas N/R = Not reported

OTHER EXPLOSIVE REMNANTS OF WAR AND LANDMINES

Cluster munitions, however, make up only a modest part of Iraq's overall explosive remnants of war (ERW) contamination. Four southern governorates alone have close to 1,000km² of minefield and substantial areas affected by ERW. Central and northern areas liberated from Islamic State have hundreds of square kilometres affected by mines of an improvised nature and the KRI reports almost 220km² of known mined area as well as ERW contamination in areas bordering Turkey that have yet to be surveyed because of insecurity.⁶ See Mine Action Review's *Clearing the Mines* report on Iraq for further information on the mine problem.

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The mine action programme in Iraq is managed along regional lines. The DMA represents Iraq internationally and oversees mine action for humanitarian purposes in 15 of Iraq's 19 governorates.⁷ Mine action in the KRI's four governorates is overseen by the Iraq Kurdistan Mine Action Agency (IKMAA), which reports to the Council of Ministers and is led by a director general who has ministerial rank.

FEDERAL IRAQ

The DMA is responsible for overseeing mine action and implementing policies set by an inter-ministerial Higher Council of Mine Action which reports to the Prime Minister. Coordinating the planning, tasking, and information management among all the actors remains a significant challenge. As a department of the Ministry of Health and Environment, the DMA has less authority than the politically powerful Ministries of Defence and Interior, which manage significant explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) and mine clearance capacity.

Rapid turnover of directors has also hampered management and policy continuity. Essa al-Fayadh, reportedly at least the tenth director since 2003, left office in February 2019. Deputy Minister of Health and Environment Kamran Ali took over as acting director of the DMA but was expected to turn the position over to a new director in the course of 2019.

The DMA oversees three Regional Mine Action Centres (RMACs):

- North: covering the governorates of Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Nineveh, and Salah ad-Din;
- Middle Euphrates (MEU): Babylon, Baghdad, Karbala, Najaf, Qadisiyah, and Wassit;
- South: Basrah, Missan, Muthanna, and Thi-Qar.

RMAC-S, whose four governorates have the vast majority of Iraq's submunition contamination, is the national focal point for its CMR response.

Federal Iraq's spending on mine action is not known. The sector remains heavily dependent on international donor funding, most of it channelled through UNMAS but with additional bilateral funding to support clearance. In the past two years the Iraqi government and donors have given priority to tackling massive contamination by mines of an improvised nature in areas liberated from Islamic State, leaving scant resources for tackling contamination by other ERW in others areas of Iraq, including the substantial cluster munitions threat concentrated in the south.

The DMA is responsible for accrediting operators after they have first registered with the NGO Directorate, a process that previously could drag on for years. In the past year Iraq has taken steps to accelerate the process enabling a significant shift of mine clearance capacity from the KRI to Federal Iraq. Operators report that cumbersome and frequently changing bureaucratic procedures governing tasking, reporting, and team deployments consumed considerable time and energy, hampering productivity in 2018. Management changes in 2019 reportedly smoothed relations between the DMA and UNMAS and appeared to pave the way for some internal restructuring within the DMA.⁸

UNMAS established a presence in Iraq in mid 2015 to help develop an emergency response in areas liberated from Islamic State. By April 2019, UNMAS had 100 personnel in Iraq, including 48 international staff, contracting implementing partners to conduct survey and clearance on tasks supporting UN Development Programme (UNDP) stabilisation initiatives and in support of the Government of Iraq.⁹ This did not extend to areas mainly affected by cluster munitions.

KURDISTAN REGION OF IRAQ

IKMAA functions as a regulator and operator in the KRI. It reports directly to the Kurdish Regional Government's Council of Ministers and coordinates four directorates in Dohuk, Erbil, Garmian, and Sulimaniya (Sleman). Financial constraints halved salaries for all staff for the last three years and resulted in a number of posts being left vacant, but in 2019 payment of salaries resumed and IKMAA planned to fill vacant posts.¹⁰ Capacity at the start of 2018 included 37 12-strong manual demining teams, 7 mechanical teams, 5 survey teams, 3 EOD teams, 10 risk education teams and 37 quality assurance (QA) teams responsible for accreditation and monitoring the work of all operators.¹¹

IKMAA's priorities for areas affected by minefields remained unchanged and included clearing agricultural land and infrastructure, tackling confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) close to populated areas and areas reporting most mine incidents and casualties.¹²

Operators identified areas affected by mines of an improvised nature for clearance in consultation with district-level authorities and submitted requests for task orders to IKMAA. Areas to which communities were returning were the main priority. IKMAA teams conducted QA.

GENDER

Gender-related issues do not feature in Iraq's National Strategic and Executive Plan for Mine Action 2017–21. International operators and their national partners individually recruit women for a variety of roles, subject to cultural sensitivities that vary in different parts of the country. Most operators employ women in administrative office roles, many also have a significant representation of women in community liaison and risk education functions, some also employ women in clearance teams, including as team leaders.¹³

UNMAS Iraq appointed a dedicated Senior Gender Adviser in 2019, the first UNMAS programme to create such a post. It required implementing partners to apply Gender in Mine Action guidelines and developed Standard Working Practices to provide guidelines for implementing partners with a focus on recruitment and activities in explosive hazard management, risk education and building capacity.¹⁴

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

Information management and access to reliable data remain a major challenge for mine action in Iraq but appeared poised for improvement in 2019.

The DMA and IKMAA maintain Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) NG databases with technical support from iMMAP, a commercial service provider working under contract to the US Department of State's Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement (WRA).

The national mine action database is located at the DMA's Baghdad headquarters. RMAC-S maintains a database in Basrah, receiving reports from demining organisations in its area of operations, which is synchronised with Baghdad's at intervals determined by the volume of data to be uploaded. Operators working on projects funded through UNMAS report directly to UNMAS. The DMA reported that before May 2018 its IMSMA database did not receive operating results data from UNMAS.¹⁵ Although iMMAP coordinates data on behalf of the DMA and IKMAA, operators report the extent to which information was shared by all national actors is unclear.¹⁶

Operators are required to submit results in hard copy delivered by hand every month to the DMA, which then uploads results into the database. The procedure meets Iraqi legal requirements, which do not recognise electronic copies, but can cause long delays in uploading results of survey and clearance. As a result, operators say task orders issued by the DMA often lack the most up-to-date information.¹⁷

In March 2019, RMAC-S started receiving data reports electronically as well as in hard copy. Improvements in cluster munitions survey are strengthening the quality of available data through RMAC-S database. In the mine action sector in general, operators report limited access to data and expressed concern about the limited quantity and quality of data available with task orders.¹⁸

All mine action stakeholders were critical of the sector's information management. The DMA and iMAP reported problems with the timeliness and accuracy of reporting by implementing partners. Operators voiced frustration with the lack of consistency in DMA reporting requirements, difficulties gaining access to data, and its generally poor quality.¹⁹

In February 2019, the DMA brought an operational dashboard into service giving operators online access to its data on contamination, survey, and clearance. As at May 2019, the DMA was preparing to roll out what it claims is the world's first Online Task Management System (OTMS), prepared by iMAP and designed to facilitate investigation of the data and streamline tasking.²⁰

In 2018, UNMAS set up an online tasking request form for UN agencies and humanitarian NGOs to expedite explosive hazard management and to report potential explosive threats in areas where they worked or intend to work in liberated areas. Once a request had been validated, and where UNMAS had capacity to respond, an implementing partner would be tasked after the DMA was informed. Alternatively, UNMAS would submit a suspected hazardous area (SHA) report to the DMA.²¹ If other operators were present in the area, UNMAS said the request would be shared via the mine action subcluster.²²

PLANNING AND TASKING

Iraq does not have a strategic plan for clearance of CMR. In 2018, Federal Iraq's operations addressing cluster munitions were confined to its southernmost governorates. Given the scale of contamination and the tiny capacity and resources available to deal with

it, RMAC-S has given priority to survey to better define contamination and clearance of areas that are close to communities, have experienced recent casualties or where contamination hinders development projects.²³

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

National mine action standards are largely consistent with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS), with small adjustments to reflect national conditions. After a trial of the Cluster Munition Remnant Survey methodology conducted by NPA in Muthanna governorate in January 2018, RMAC-S drafted a national standard adopting the CMRS methodology, which is under consideration by the DMA.²⁴

Available data on CMR contamination is unreliable, based on non-technical survey conducted years earlier to an uncertain standard and in areas with few inhabitants at the time to inform the survey. RMAC-S received US bombing data for the 1991 Gulf War but not for the US-led coalition's offensive in 2003. As a result, operators have cancelled large areas of recorded hazardous areas through non-technical survey. They also found that sometimes significant areas of polygons tasked for clearance had no contamination but clearing to fade-out identified substantial affected areas beyond the initial polygon boundary. With the adoption of CMRS/technical survey in 2018, NPA said it is reducing clearance tasks and defining newly identified contamination more precisely.²⁵

OPERATORS

The Ministry of Interior's Civil Defence is the only national operator undertaking humanitarian CMR clearance. National commercial companies contracted by the Ministry of Oil and active in 2018 included the Al Khebra Company for Demining and the Ta'az Group.²⁶

International organisations undertaking CMR area clearance included FSD, HI, and NPA in Federal Iraq and MAG in the KRI.

The Ministry of Defence alone is authorised to conduct demolitions of ERW in Federal Iraq.

OPERATIONAL TOOLS

Only manual clearance of CMR is conducted in Iraq.

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT AND ARTICLE 4 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT IN 2018

By May 2019, Iraq had reported the release of a total of more than 42km² of land affected by cluster munitions through survey and clearance in 2018²⁷ but that may understate the actual result. IKMAA had not reported results for 2018 and significant discrepancies existed between the results of survey reported by the DMA and operators.

SURVEY IN 2018

Results in Federal Iraq were unclear. The DMA reported 35km² released through non-technical and technical survey in the four southern provinces. However, NPA, the only operator conducting systematic survey of CMR in RMAC-S's area of operations in 2018, reported cancelling or reducing a combined total of more than 90km² during the year (see Table 2).²⁸

Table 2: NPA CMR-related survey in 2018²⁹

Governorate	SHAs cancelled	Area cancelled (m ²)	Area reduced by TS (m ²)
Basra	21	7,318,961	151,441
Mayssan	1	286,121	0
Muthanna	8	82,193,780	807,773
Totals	30	89,798,862	959,214

CLEARANCE IN 2018

Iraq appears to have cleared a total of almost 7.2km² of CMR-affected area in 2018 (see Table 3), almost entirely in Federal Iraq and three-quarters of it in RMAC-S's area of operations.³⁰

The DMA attributed most of the increase to clearance by Iraq's Civil Defence, which operated with around 12 teams conducting survey and clearance in the south and reportedly cleared 3.4km² in 2018 compared with 1.1km² the previous year.³¹

Table 3: Clearance of CMR-contaminated area in 2018³²

Operator	Area cleared (m ²)
FEDERAL IRAQ	
Al Khebra	60,287
Civil Defence	3,414,495
FSD	32,125
HI	278,534
MoD	96,452
NPA	3,272,029
Taaz	13,321
Subtotal	7,167,243
KRI	
MAG ³³	27,663
Subtotal	27,663
Total	7,194,906

Iraq reported destruction of 3,540 submunitions in Federal Iraq in 2018, triple the number destroyed the previous year.³⁴ Demolitions of all ERW in Federal Iraq are conducted exclusively by the Ministry of Defence, as a result Iraq did not report items found by clearance operators in 2018. NPA reported finding 702 submunitions during clearance in 2018 and another 902 during technical survey while Danish Demining Group (DDG) found 41 submunitions.³⁵

In the KRI, MAG said it destroyed 39 submunitions in the course of area clearance in Dohuk governorate and another 68 in spot or other clearance tasks in Nineveh governorate.³⁶ In 2019, the Ministry of Defence deployed an engineer team working full time in RMAC-S area of operations resulting in more timely demolitions and a sharp increase in the number of CMR destroyed.³⁷

ARTICLE 4 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE

CCM ENTRY INTO FORCE FOR IRAQ: 1 NOVEMBER 2013

ARTICLE 4 DEADLINE: 1 NOVEMBER 2023

ON TRACK TO MEET ARTICLE 4 DEADLINE: NO

The scale of known CMR contamination, and the probability that much more may be found as survey progresses ensures Iraq will not meet its CCM Article 4 deadline. A further challenge is the low priority accorded cluster munitions clearance by international donors and national authorities.

RMAC-S calculated it could tackle the amount of CMR contamination it had identified at the end of 2018 in five years with 34 teams but had less than half that capacity available in 2018 with little immediate prospect of a significant increase in capacity while donors focused on clearance of liberated areas. The Ministry of Defence made clear operational commitments in liberated areas would occupy available capacity and would not make it possible to deploy engineers onto CMR clearance in 2019.³⁸

Table 4: Five-year summary of CMR clearance (2014–18)

Year	Central and Southern Iraq (m ²)	KRI (m ²)	Totals (m ²)
2018	7,167,243	27,663 ³⁹	7,194,906
2017	4,381,717	348,274	4,729,991
2016	2,889,585	209,920	3,099,505
2015	8,235,094	546,371	8,781,465
2014	N/K	N/K	N/K
Totals	22,673,639	1,132,228	23,805,867

N/K = Not known

- 1 Interview with Nibras Fakhir Matrood, Director, DMA RMAC-S, and Haitham Fattah Lafta, Operations Manager, DMA RMAC-S, Basrah, 29 April 2019; Article 7 Report for 2018, Form F.
- 2 Email from Khatab Omer Ahmed, Planning Manager, Directorate General of Technical Affairs, Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency (IKMAA), 8 May 2018; email from Portia Stratton, Country Director, MAG, 13 May 2019.
- 3 Interview with Mats Hektor, Project Manager, NPA South Iraq, and Mousa Alsquor, Operations Manager, NPA South Iraq, Basrah, 28 April 2019.
- 4 Interview with Nibras Fakhir Matrood and Haitham Fattah Lafta, RMAC-S, Basrah, 29 April 2019; and with Mats Hektor, NPA, Basrah, 28 April 2019.
- 5 Data provided by Nibras Fakhir Matrood, RMAC-S, Basrah, 29 April 2019. The total is corrected as the total provided by RMAC-S was inaccurate.
- 6 Interviews with Nibras Fakhir Matrood and Haitham Fattah Lafta, RMAC-S, Basrah, 29 April 2019; and Siraj Barzani, Director General, IKMAA, in Erbil, 9 May 2019.
- 7 DMA presentation to 2015 Mine Action Country Planning Workshop for Iraq, Istanbul, 13 May 2015; Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, "Capacity Development Support to National Mine Action Authorities in Iraq, Phase 1: Initial Assessment Mission", February 2012.
- 8 Interviews with mine action stakeholders in Iraq, 29 April–6 May 2019.
- 9 Email from Shinobu Mashima, Programme Officer, UNMAS Iraq, 4 May 2019.
- 10 Interview with Siraj Barzani, IKMAA, Erbil, 9 May 2019.
- 11 Email from Khatab Omer Ahmad, IKMAA, 8 May 2018.
- 12 Interview with Siraj Barzani, IKMAA, Erbil, 9 May 2019.
- 13 Interviews with mine action stakeholders in Iraq, 28 April–6 May 2019.
- 14 Email from Shinobu Mashima, UNMAS, 4 May 2019.
- 15 Interview with Ahmed Aljasim, DMA, in Geneva, 23 May 2019.
- 16 Interviews with operators in Iraq, 28 April–6 May 2019.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 Ibid.
- 19 Interviews with Shawkat Tayeh, Head of Operations, DMA, Baghdad, 5 May 2019; Isam Ghareeb, Country Representative and Senior Technical Adviser, iMMAP, Erbil, 7 May 2019; and with operators in Iraq, 28 April–6 May 2019.
- 20 Interviews with Ahmed Aljasim, Head of Planning and Information, DMA, Erbil, 9 May 2019, and in Geneva, 23 May 2019; and Karzan Hamad, Senior Information Officer and Web Developer, iMMAP, Erbil, 9 May 2019.
- 21 Email from Shinobu Mashima, UNMAS, 4 May 2019.
- 22 Email from Dandan Xu, Associate Programme Management Officer, UNMAS, 28 June 2019.
- 23 Interview with Nibras Fakhir Matrood and Haitham Fattah Lafta, RMAC-S, Basrah, 29 April 2019.
- 24 Ibid.; and interview with Mats Hektor, NPA, Basrah, 28 April 2019.
- 25 Interviews with Mats Hektor, NPA, and Mousa Alsquor, NPA, Basrah, 28 April 2019; and emails, 22 and 28 May 2019.
- 26 Email from Nibras Fakhir Matrood, RMAC-S, 10 May 2019.
- 27 CCM Article 7 Report for 2018, Form F.
- 28 Email from Mats Hektor, NPA, 28 April 2019.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 Article 7 Report for 2018, Form F; email from Nibras Fakhir Matrood, RMAC-S, 10 May 2019. The DMA also reported clearance of 10.3 million square meters in 2018. It said Article 7 Report data included only results reported in 2018 and the higher figure included results of clearance conducted in 2018 but only reported and recorded in the database in 2019. The DMA's higher result attributed clearance of 6.8 million square meters in 2018 to NPA, more than double the area reported cleared by NPA.
- 31 Email from Nibras Fakhir Matrood, RMAC-S, 10 May 2019.
- 32 Except as specified, data provided by email by Nibras Fakhir Matrood, RMAC-S, 10 May 2019. NPA reported clearing 3,778,754m² and DDG said it cleared 170,000m².
- 33 Email from Portia Stratton, MAG, 13 May 2019.
- 34 CCM Article 7 Report for 2018, Form F.
- 35 Emails from Mats Hektor, NPA, 28 April and 22 May 2019, and Mohammed Qasim, Programme Manager, DDG Basrah, 29 April 2019.
- 36 Email from Portia Stratton, MAG, 13 May 2019.
- 37 Interview with Nibras Fakhir Matrood and Haitham Fattah Lafta, RMAC-S, Basrah, 29 April 2019.
- 38 Ibid.
- 39 Email from Portia Stratton, MAG, 13 May 2019.