



## Iraq shuts UN mission on ISIS crimes for 'failure to cooperate'

### Description

**UN : The Iraqi government has shut down a UN mission aimed at helping Iraq investigate ISIS genocide and war crimes as a result of its failure to cooperate with Baghdad.**

The UN Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Daesh/ISIS (UNITAD) did not coordinate properly with Iraqi authorities and is no longer necessary, said Farhad Alaaldin, foreign affairs advisor to Iraq's prime minister.

Alaaldin told Reuters, "In our view, the mission has ended and we appreciate the work that has been done and it's time to move on."

UNITAD "didn't respond to repeated requests for sharing evidence," Alaaldin added, calling on the mission to do so before it officially closes.

In September 2023, the UNSC renewed UNITAD's mandate for only one more year, coming at Baghdad's request. Relations between the UN mission and the Iraqi state have reportedly continued to sour.

UNITAD was established in 2017 to prosecute ISIS members involved in genocide and crimes against humanity.

The mission was reluctant to share evidence with Iraqi authorities due to Baghdad's use of the death penalty, sources in the know told Reuters. The mission's head, German prosecutor Christian Ritscher, said safeguards over the death penalty could have been reached but that the issue was not discussed with authorities.

He added that Iraq has not yet passed legislation allowing the prosecution of international crimes, putting the mission in an "awkward position."

According to the sources, UNITAD "had not properly invested in the politics of dealing with Iraqi

authorities” under Ritscher’s leadership, “harming the relationship.”

“Death penalty was always a main issue with UNITAD. Its mandate was far-fetched but many hoped it could work. Added to that, the current leadership did not have the political skills to reach out. That doesn’t work here in Iraq. Everything is highly political here,” one international diplomat said.

Razaw Salihy, an Iraqi researcher at Amnesty International, said Iraq must reform its judiciary and pass legislation for international crimes. Members of the Yazidi community in Iraq have also complained that those who perpetrated attacks against them must be tried specifically for those crimes rather than prosecuted for simply being members of ISIS.

ISIS’ precursor group, Islamic State of Iraq (ISI), was formed in the aftermath of the chaos instigated by the 2003 US invasion of Iraq. While its members initially began crossing into Syria in 2011, the group solidified its presence there between 2013 and 2014.

In 2014, it crossed into Iraq and, later that year, took over massive swathes of the country’s territory, including Mosul, Tikrit, and Sinjar.

Iraq’s Yazidi community was subjected to horrific atrocities when the extremist group attacked and captured Sinjar province in August 2014. Thousands were killed, kidnapped, or sold into slavery.

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### **Date Created**

03/21/2024