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## Structure and Missions of the Popular Mobilization Forces: An Analytical Study of the Structure and Missions of the Popular Mobilization Forces and the Peacekeeping Operation: Nineveh as a Case Study

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### Abstract

On December 9, 2017, the Iraqi government announced that it had achieved victory over ISIS, after three years of fighting. On the other hand, it became imperative for government agencies to deal with the humanitarian tragedies and destruction left behind by ISIS, and to address the motives and factors that enabled ISIS to find the incubating social environment, which granted it easy control over Iraqi lands, amid welcomes in some areas, indifference in others, and resistance in a few other areas. Achieving peace and coexistence in the areas emerging from conflict requires, in addition to achieving societal reconciliation, overcoming the problems of the past that led to the state of affairs, in a way that meets the needs, aspirations and demands of the residents of the liberated areas. Working in post-conflict environments requires the participation of government, security forces, international organizations, and civil society organizations all together.

**Keywords:** Popular Mobilization Forces, Nineveh, Peacekeeping.

### INTRODUCTION

The sensitivity of the post-conflict environment, and the peculiarity of Nineveh Governorate, as a diverse mix of ethnicities, makes the mission and strategy of the security forces to administer the region of great importance and caution. Especially since these forces are obliged to study and know the previous destabilizations and their obstacles, take them into consideration, and develop the necessary strategies to overcome them. The authorities responsible for the situation in the liberated areas must raise importance to what the residents feel there, take into account their fears, and seek to dispel them, even if such fears are minor, to avoid creating any possible quarrels and tensions again.

The peace-building process is a long-term process, the first stage of which for the areas emerging from conflict is peacekeeping. Peacekeeping forces work on three levels: (reducing violence, maintaining security, and humanitarian aid), and as we mentioned when discussing peacekeeping operations in the first chapter, they are not dependent upon, neither they are tied to the peacekeeping forces of the United Nations, but individuals or institutions can carry out this task, and the same applies to the Popular Mobilization Forces. But time, and the wounds that have not yet been healed, place great responsibility on these or other forces; In order to move to the stage of permanent peace and not going back.

The Popular Mobilization Forces participated in the military liberation battles, at the same time, they carried out relief and humanitarian missions during and after the battles. This role presents them as an important factor in the peacekeeping and peacebuilding process, if their military deployment in areas emerging from the conflict coincides with the proper management of diversity, and addressing disruptions within this environment, and avoiding repeating the mistakes that the Iraqi security forces made before ISIS.

We will quickly pass through the stage that led to the establishment of the Popular Mobilization Forces for the peacekeeping operations of the Popular Mobilization Forces, and then study the Nineveh Plain area as a case; The Popular Mobilization Forces hold this area of Nineveh Governorate after its liberation, Christians constitute the majority in this area, in addition to the Shabak, Yazidis and other minorities, ISIS had committed genocide against a section of minorities in the Nineveh Plain.

## Research Problem

The research problem is to answer a basic question: How can community peace be restored in Nineveh Governorate, which has suffered intimidation, fighting and abuse of all its components by ISIS?

Other questions arise from this question:

- 1- What is the entity that possesses humanitarian and military components capable of administering Nineveh after liberation?
- 2- How was the Popular Mobilization Forces able to gain the confidence of the societal components in Nineveh, and what are its tools and methods for restoring peace among its components that were divided by the war?

## Research Hypothesis

The researcher assumes that the Popular Mobilization Forces, by virtue of the conditions of establishment, and the medical composition of individuals within it, starting from the top of the pyramid and ending with its affiliates, combines all the strengths contained in a different group of actors operating in conflict environments (civil, military and humanitarian), and thus can be invested to achieve Optimum benefit in rebuilding peace in Nineveh and the rest of the provinces that fell into the hands of ISIS.

### The structure and functions of the Popular Mobilization Forces in the Nineveh liberation operation

The Popular Mobilization Forces were formed in accordance with the mobilization decision that followed the fall of Mosul in Iraq, as a cabinet statement was issued on June 11, 2014 urging: "Citizens volunteer and take up arms to confront armed groups, and mobilize and mobilize all the political, financial and popular capabilities, to restore the areas controlled by Terrorists over it" <sup>(1)</sup>. The state of general mobilization in Iraq was reinforced, after the religious reference's fatwa was issued on June 14, which called on citizens who could bear arms to volunteer and defend Iraq <sup>(2)</sup>. These forces then took on an institutional form after Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki ordered the formation of the Popular Mobilization Forces Committee, then the Popular Mobilization Forces Directorate, to organize and arm the incoming volunteers <sup>(3)</sup>.

Popular Mobilization Forces fighters can be divided into several categories:

1. Volunteers who joined after the Iraqi government's decision.
2. The volunteers within the Iraqi resistance factions, who in turn are divided into:
3. Factions formed after the US occupation of Iraq in 2003.
4. Factions formed after the fatwa was issued.
5. Factions affiliated with political parties such as Saraya Al Salam.
6. The volunteers within the fatwa of the Sistani reference.
7. Clans in the western regions.
8. Minorities whose areas were occupied by ISIS.

Periods of conflict, and the first years after its end, are sensitive and important stages, and civilians must be their main focus. It is about rescuing the displaced and protecting their property, then eliminating the sources of physical and moral threat, securing and providing all means of humanitarian and relief assistance until the end of the military operations. After the military operations, whether they ended in victory or a peace agreement, the conditions of the liberated areas should not be conditioned by any political or other considerations. In this way, the peacekeeping process proceeds in broader ways, paving the way for the long-term process of building peace in societies emerging from conflict, in order for people to feel peace and stability; Peacekeepers must do their job by creating a state of safety that leads people to trust and start over.

### 1- Security Directorate:

During conflicts and wars, security is the most important issue <sup>(4)</sup>. Providing security and safety, especially citizen-centered security, is essential in keeping peace in conflict- and post-conflict societies; Because security

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<sup>1</sup> A group of researchers, The Popular Mobilization, the Last Bet, Baladi Center for Strategic Studies and Research, Baghdad, second edition, 2015, p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Sistani's website, available at the following link: <https://www.sistani.org/arabic/archive/24905/>

<sup>3</sup> Mosaddegh Adel, The Constitutional and Legal Organization of the Popular Mobilization and Armed Formations in Iraq, First Edition, Iraq Center for Studies, Baghdad, 2020, p. 48.

<sup>4</sup> Security and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding: the role of the United Nations, United Nations Human Rights, 2005, available in: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2009/10/security-and-post-conflict-peacebuilding-role-united-nations-comments-ms-mehr>

directly related to meeting people's needs can also lead to improvements in other dimensions of development, such as education and health care <sup>(5)</sup>,

Security forces all over the world are fighting to provide security for their citizens. In areas emerging from conflict and war, providing security plays an essential role in the peace process; Because it restores to civilians a sense of safety prior to the war period, and stimulates the desire for stability and coexistence; Especially in cases where civilians feel that the security forces are responsive to their needs and requirements of the post-conflict phase, it is true that the stereotype of the security forces is related to providing security, which is the first step on the road to peace; However, security forces can play other additional roles in the peace process, as is the role played by the Security and Discipline Directorate in the Popular Mobilization Forces.

The role of the Security Directorate in the peacekeeping operation from 2014 to 2021 in Nineveh can be summarized as follows <sup>(6)</sup>:

**Table (1) Human Security Operations - Security Directorate**

| Operation   | Number                   |
|---|--------------------------|
| Transporting and securing the displaced to Al-Jada'a camp                     | 29,700 Displaced Person  |
| Transporting and securing the displaced to Hammam Al-Alil                     | 80,113 Displaced Person  |
| Transporting and securing the displaced to Umm Al-Jarabe' camp                | 65,142 Displaced Person  |
| Transporting and securing the displaced to Al-Hol camp                        | 25,000 Displaced Person  |
| Transporting and securing the displaced inside the liberated lands in Nineveh | 79,928 Displaced Person  |
| Securing and returning families from Al-Hol camp in Syria to Iraq             | 50,000 Displaced Person  |
| Securing and transferring the displaced from Al-Hasakah, Syria                | 502,200 Displaced Person |
| Rescuing civilians from separate areas in Ayman Mosul                         | 140,000 Citizen          |
| Rescue of civilians in the villages of Ain Talawi and Adaya                   | 1,150 Citizen            |
| Rescue of civilians in Tal Abta, west of Mosul                                | 7,260 Citizen            |
| Rescue of civilians in the areas of Tal Afar district                         | 3,500 Citizen            |
| Securing the exit of civilians from Al-Baaj during the liberation of Mosul    | 4,500 Citizen            |

With regard to the citizens' property, including cattle and vehicles, the Mobilization Security Directorate has accomplished the following:

**Table (2) Humanitarian Operations - Security Directorate**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Transporting 640 vehicles to Al-Jada'a camp        | Transporting 8,000 sheep to Al-Jadaa camp        |
| Transporting 524 vehicles to Hammam al-Alil camp   | Transporting 58,779 sheep to Hammam Al-Alil camp |
| Transporting 2,850 vehicles to Umm Al-Jarabe' camp | Transporting 52,621 sheep to Umm al-Jarabe' camp |

After the liberation of Nineveh, the Security Directorate undertook various tasks, such as security checks for the displaced, securing their transportation to the camps, and providing them with logistical assistance, protecting field hospitals in coordination with the brigades of the Popular Mobilization and its accompanying medical staff, and providing protection for media teams. In addition to supervising works of humanitarian organizations operating within the governorate <sup>(7)</sup>.

In addition to that, upholding the rule of law is one of the fundamentals of post-conflict peace; Because it guarantees the protection of human rights by punishing those who violate the rights of individuals; Through the support and assistance of the police and correctional institutions <sup>(8)</sup>. The work of the Directorate of Security and Discipline included a contribution to operations to support the rule of law through: Returning real estate seized by influential people within the governorate to their owners, closing (Key Card) offices that practice fraud, arresting people who engage in extortion with people by claiming to belong to the Popular Mobilization Forces, their number reached (500). Opening of complaints offices on the right and left side of Mosul. The number of complaints submitted from 2017 to 2022 reached (10,000) complaints. Closure of fake headquarters that are not affiliated with the Popular Mobilization Forces and exploit citizens. The total of fake headquarters that has been closed reached (85) Headquarters, holding undisciplined affiliates accountable

<sup>5</sup> Craig Valters, Gideon Rabinowitz and Lisa Denney, Security in post- conflict contexts: What counts as progress and what drives it? ODI, UK, April 2014, p 3.

<sup>6</sup> Private information obtained by the researcher from the General Directorate of Security and Discipline - the Popular Mobilization Authority on 22/5/2022.

<sup>7</sup> Private information obtained by the researcher from the General Directorate of Security and Discipline - the Popular Mobilization Authority on 22/5/2022..

<sup>8</sup> Muhammad Jabbar Jadoua, The Role of International Peacekeeping Operations in Resolving Internal Conflicts, Journal of Political Science, College of Political Science - University of Kufa, No. 38, 2015, p. 136.

within the ranks of the Popular Mobilization Forces, securing the protection of officials and leaders coming to the governorate, prosecuting gangs trading in human organs and handing them over to the competent authorities, which reached (5) gangs, securing roads leading to religious shrines, arresting the elements infiltrated with the displaced and handing them over to the judiciary, Providing the Operations Command and the Intelligence Aide with the coordinates and routes used by ISIS elements, and dismantling the sleeper cells in the province. With regard to agriculture, a department was assigned for securing and protecting farmers during the harvest season and provides possible facilities for them. It follows up the marketing of wheat and barley crops inside the governorate and limits their marketing outside it except with an official letter from the Ministries of Agriculture and Trade and the Joint Operations Command, limiting the smuggling of livestock outside Nineveh, limiting the smuggling process to and from the governorate, as more than (250) smuggling operations have been thwarted, and finally, implementing the decisions of the Ministry of Agriculture to prevent the entry of imported crops to the liberated governorates <sup>(9)</sup>.

## 2- Medical Directorate:

Providing health and medical care is a basic need during and after conflicts and wars. All parties cooperate with each other to quickly respond to displaced civilians or military personnel, in areas emerging from conflict. Providing medical and health care is an important part of peace processes <sup>(10)</sup>; Because it has a positive impact in reducing the obstacles to stability in these areas, and for humanitarian considerations <sup>(11)</sup>. In addition to the fact that when health emergencies occur in fragile settings and conflict areas, interventions by organizations or others (here the Popular Mobilization Forces) prevent and rebuild health systems, or are partners in controlling the situation and assisting in the emergency response, this in itself is a driver to grievances and more unrest and a contributor to peace; It enhances vertical trust between the state and citizens <sup>(12)</sup>.

With the launch of the "We're Coming Nineveh" operations, the Medical Directorate, one of the Popular Mobilization Forces, contributed to providing medical care in Mosul. There was an axis called (the martyr Haider Abd Zuwer), divided into several hospitals and medical detachments, the number of hospitals in it (10) hospitals, and the number of medical detachments (20) detachments, the Directorate of Medicine took charge of providing medical services such as: treatment and ambulance and transporting the wounded and sick civilians And the soldiers, the provision of treatment, the transportation of the martyrs to Baghdad, and the total of what the Popular Mobilization Forces provided since the start of the operations (We Are Coming, Nineveh) until 2019 can be summarized in the following table <sup>(13)</sup>:

**Table (3) Humanitarian Effort of the Medical Directorate**

| Hospital Name                                  | Number of civilians and displaced persons | Number of wounded and visitors from security forces and Popular Mobilization Forces |
|--|---|---|
| Martyr Ali Al-Aboudi Hospital                  | 6050                                      | 12000   |
| Martyr Salam Al Dirawi Hospital                | 5250                                      | 12600   |
| Martyr Jassem Shuber Hospital                  | 10800                                     | 21640   |
| Martyr Abu Fadda Al Daraji Hospital            | 3120                                      | 4800  |
| Martyr Haider Al-Mayahi Hospital               | 52495                                     | 32490   |
| Martyr Abu Hussein Al-Budairi Hospital         | 1840                                      | 3620  |
| Martyr Muhammad Al-Budairi Hospital            | 1860                                      | 2700  |
| Martyr Abu Yasser Al-Obaidi Hospital           | 1700                                      | 1870  |
| Martyr Nour El Saray Hospital                  | 640                                       | 1230  |
| Martyr Abu Taha Al-Nasiri Hospital             | 6200                                      | 7880  |
| the total                                      | 88255                                     | 100830  |
| Surgical operations performed in all hospitals | 68  | 342   |
| Number of medical detachments (75)             | 9320                                      | 14650   |
| The grand total of hospitals and detachments   | 97575                                     | 115480  |

<sup>9</sup> Private information obtained by the researcher from the General Directorate of Security and Discipline - the Popular Mobilization Authority on 5/22/2022.

<sup>10</sup> Antonia Chase and Martha Mina, *Imagining Coexistence Together - Renewing Humanity After Violent Ethnic Conflict*, translated by: Fouad Al-Srouji, Al-Ahlia for Publishing and Distribution, Jordan, first edition, 2006, p. 35.

<sup>11</sup> Health and peace initiative, World Health Organization, p.7

<sup>12</sup> Report of the Secretary-General on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace WHO Thematic Paper contribution, p 5, 2020.

<sup>13</sup> Private information obtained by the researcher from the Directorate of Medicine - Popular Mobilization Authority on 7/5/2022.

The link between health and peace is closely related; Because the availability of health systems capable of meeting the needs of the population is part of a healthy environment for living, in light of the nature of the situation in the country, what the Directorate of Medicine has provided is considered an important tributary to the government health institution concerned in the first place, and filled the shortcomings that resulted from the crisis, and relieved the health institution through its participation in meeting the needs of civilians and military personnel giving its important part of the peacemaking process.

### 3- General Directorate of Military Engineering:

Scenes of ruined cities and buildings on the ground will bring-back details of war to people, open their wounds, and remind them of the tragedies they suffered during the conflict; Therefore, cleaning cities, getting rid of the remnants of war, and rehabilitating the infrastructure directly related to civilians, in addition to being part of the process of post-conflict reconstruction, it is considered an important step in the peacemaking process; Because it contributes to removing the tragic image of the war from the memory of civilians and those affected, and it strengthens people's sense of the end of the conflict and the return to normal life <sup>(14)</sup>.

The participation of the Popular Mobilization Forces in the peacekeeping operation was undertaken by the General Directorate of Military Engineering. Where the residents of the regions and the governor of Nineveh launched an appeal to the authority to remove war remnants, remove destroyed buildings, and clean cities, and the Directorate of Military Engineering responded and launched the "Nineveh Renaissance" campaign. The campaign achievements can be summarized in the following table <sup>(15)</sup>:

**Table (4) Achievements of the Military Engineering Directorate**

| Region                                       | Disposed Debris (Ton) |
|--|-----------------------|
| Zanjili area                                 | 431912                |
| Old Mosul                                    | 269252                |
| Tal Afar District                            | 44758                 |
| Train Station (Old Wheat Warehouse Building) | 42089                 |
| Bab Al-Toub - Wednesday Market               | 41814                 |
| Dandan area                                  | 41154                 |
| Nineveh Governorate Building                 | 40149                 |
| Republic filling station                     | 39764                 |
| Sinjar District                              | 39114                 |
| Old City - Nujaifi Street                    | 38487                 |
| Spring Break - next to the river             | 37754                 |
| Old Court Building                           | 37482                 |
| Old Mosul Municipality                       | 37294                 |
| Ghazlani area                                | 36954                 |
| Naqshbandi school                            | 36314                 |
| Wadi Hajar area                              | 35714                 |
| <b>Total</b>                                 | <b>1,249,996 tons</b> |

### 4- Logistics Support Directorate

Logistical support means providing the needs of personnel to ensure their movement, and maintaining equipment used for its continuity in peace operations, as well as in military operations. Logistics support is critical to the safety and continuity of peacekeeping forces, and to the vitality and success of every stage of the peacekeeping operation. These processes can be divided into: operations in which logistical support is primarily provided by actors involved in the process of peacekeeping (self-reliance), and operations that rely on support provided by partners, such as states, organizations, and community-level actors (dependence on external partners) <sup>(16)</sup>.

The Popular Mobilization Forces (Mira's Auxiliary) was established, which is the directorate specialized in logistical support operations since the beginning of the Nineveh liberation operations, and providing logistical support to the Popular Mobilization Forces (Mira's Auxiliary). Heavy, medium, and light, military vehicles and equipment, providing food, housing military units, deploying vehicle repair units between operations

<sup>14</sup> Antonia Chase and Martha Mina, *Imagining Coexistence Together - The Renewal of Humanity After Violent Ethnic Conflict*, op. cit., p. 38.

<sup>15</sup> Private information obtained by the researcher from the General Directorate of Military Engineering - Popular Mobilization Authority 2/6/2022.

<sup>16</sup> KATHARINA P. COLEMAN AND PAUL D. WILLIAMS, *Logistics Partnerships in Peace Operations*, International Peace Institute, New York, 2017, p 1.

cutters and weapons maintenance units and returning them to service, constructing fixed and mobile stores, constructing gas stations in all areas of Mosul Island, and the roads linking the two islands of Mosul Salah al-Din, the construction of a helipad for the Iraqi army's aviation, the transfer and installation of power and communication towers for the liberated areas; In order to secure communications between the participating units during the course of the battles, and to install thermal cameras. In addition to building military points for the forces along the border strip with Syria.

As for the efforts and services provided by Mira's Auxiliary on the humanitarian side, they are: providing ambulances to transport the injured and wounded, providing Al-Jada'a camp, which is located south of the city of Mosul, with foodstuffs, baby milk, water and fuel, in addition to equipping it with tents, which includes hundreds of displaced families, and establishing a working bakery. 24 hours to provide bread to the military forces and the displaced.

The Auxiliary escorted the displaced families from the villages and the countryside during the liberation operations, and transported them to safe places, as well as providing their vehicles with fuel. Mira's Auxiliary adopted the construction of the shrine of Sayyida Zainab al-Soghra, daughter of Imam Ali bin Al-Hussein (peace be upon them) in Sinjar district, after ISIS completely destroying it. In addition to allocating more than 300 members to work 24 hours a day to speed up the completion process, Mira's peace efforts can be summarized as follows <sup>(17)</sup>:

Table (5): Achievements of the Logistics Support Directorate in Peacekeeping

| Number or Quantity                  | Purpose  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| 500 Trailers                        | Transporting construction materials, foodstuffs, aid and weapons to the first blocking areas in Mosul and vice versa |
| 150 Tanker                          | To provide fuel for military units as well as for the displaced  |
| 100 Bus                             | To evacuate the wounded, injured and martyrs from the areas of military operations                                   |
| (24.840000) Tons                    | Food and medical supplies  |
| (60000000) Liters of Gasoline       | For civilians  |
| (60000000) Liters of Kerosene       | For Civilians and Military   |
| (24000000) Liters of White Oil      | For civilians  |
| (22000000) Liters of drinking water | For the displaced  |
| (432000000) Liters of water         | For Human usage  |

This confirms the importance of logistical support operations; As a means of continuity of forces, and as the Popular Mobilization Forces exercised the role of peacekeeping forces in conflict areas, its Directorate of Logistics Support, based on the aforementioned, exercised two parallel roles: It performed its duty to the Popular Mobilization Forces that played a crucial role in peacekeeping on the one hand, and carried out its own peacekeeping operations, as we have seen earlier, on the other.

### 1- Providing Relief Aids:

The greatest impact in wars and armed conflicts is at the expense of civilians; Conflicts cause a shortage of materials necessary to sustain their lives, due to military operations, and the inability to reach what they need, and the lack of what they have or their inability to secure. Providing humanitarian aid is a collective responsibility shared by the warring parties, international organizations, states and societal actors <sup>(18)</sup>.

After the large wave of displacement that the Nineveh Governorate witnessed, in conjunction with the military operations that were launched in October 2016, in which the security forces from the army, police, counter-terrorism and the Popular Mobilization Forces participated; To liberate Nineveh Governorate from ISIS, Chief of Staff of the Popular Mobilization Forces Jamal Jaafar (Abu Mahdi Al-Muhandis) launched on March 12, 2017, the humanitarian “#ForYou” initiative to support the displaced citizens of Mosul, in response to the call of the religious authority, the campaign was announced on March 14 On the morning of Friday 17/3/2017, the largest humanitarian aid convoy set off towards the city of Mosul <sup>(19)</sup>.

Table (6): (#ForYou) Campaign to aid Mosul Displaced Citizens

|                    |
|--------------------|
| #ForYou Operations |
|--------------------|

<sup>17</sup> Private information obtained by the researcher from the Assistant for Al Meera Affairs - Popular Mobilization Authority 6/30/2022.

<sup>18</sup> Haider Kazem Abd Ali, Qassem Mahdi Hamza, Humanitarian Aid: A Study in the Light of International Humanitarian Law, Al-Mohaqiq Al-Hilli Journal of Legal and Political Sciences, Third Issue / Eighth Year - 2016, p. 371.

<sup>19</sup> Information obtained by the researcher from the Directorate of Public Information – the Popular Mobilization Authority on 4/25/2022.

|   |
|---|
| The participation of 13 Iraqi governorates in sending aid convoys in the form of batches.   |
| More than 5,100 citizens volunteered to accompany the campaign convoys to distribute donations.   |
| Sending more than 2,850 trucks loaded with foodstuffs and in kind.  |
| Distribution of about (287,000) thousand food baskets, including: dry rations, clean water, vegetables, dates, milk for children and other items.                               |
| Providing medium and small bread making ovens that move between displacement camps.   |
| Building more than (180) tents.   |
| Providing (covers, fans, clothes, children's toys, sweet boxes).  |
| Providing power generators with fuel to run them.   |
| Establishing mobile hospitals to treat the displaced, and deploying medical units and wheels to provide first aid.  |
| Performing more than (40) successful surgeries for serious cases.   |
| Treating more than (15,211) displaced people in Popular Mobilization Forces hospitals, between sick and wounded.  |
| The participation of religious institutions in Iraq, such as the shrines and the delegation of religious reference.   |
| Participation of state departments in providing aid, such as the Ministry of Health and Oil and the Ministry of Transport.  |
| The participation of civil society organizations, most notably the participation of Dary Humanitarian Organization And the Iraq Entrance Health Organization.                   |
| Participation of the Directorates of the Popular Mobilization Forces as the Directorate of Medicine and the Directorate of Logistics Support of the Popular Mobilization Forces |
| Contribution of Iraqi artists.  |
| The campaign covered more than (180) Displaced Persons in the camps within the liberated areas.   |

**The table is conducted by the researcher based on the information obtained from the Directorate of Information of the Popular Mobilization Forces.**

#### **5- Directorate of Explosive Control - Field Engineering**

Removing mines and remnants of war is one of the peacekeeping missions; For the purpose of securing the lives of civilians after their return to their areas, as well as eliminating its long-term effects on the population after the end of armed conflicts <sup>(20)</sup>.

Demining operations aim to reduce the social, economic and environmental impact of mines, explosives and other remnants of war on the population; In order to improve their security and opportunities for social and economic development, a distinction must be made between military demining, which means only clearing strategically and tactically important areas in a military context <sup>(21)</sup>, and clearing residential areas for humanitarian purposes. On the other hand, a distinction must be made between removing mines in the context of active conflict, which is a dangerous, difficult and purely humanitarian process; Because demining in this case requires, in order to reach contaminated areas, a stable and secure situation to allow operations, as well as time, personnel and logistical capabilities, which often makes demining operations active in post-conflict environments <sup>(22)</sup>.

As for the Directorate of Military Engineering - the Popular Mobilization Forces, and since the beginning of the establishment of the Popular Mobilization Forces, it has worked to remove mines in military areas or areas that the military forces need to clear in order to open the road, in addition to its activity by removing mines for purely humanitarian purposes, on the other hand, it has Explosive control works in both conflict environments, active conflict areas, and post-conflict areas as we shall see <sup>(23)</sup>.

#### **First: (#WeAreComingNinveh) Operations 2017:**

During the Nineveh liberation operations, the field engineering participated in facilitating the access of the Iraqi army forces to the areas and villages by opening roads, dismantling and removing explosive devices from the Makhoul mountains to the Qayyarah operations sector. The area cleared by explosive control reached (1,708) square kilometers, including: clearing (5000) homes, (510) government building, (150) main street,

<sup>20</sup> Muhammad Jabbar Jadoua, The Role of International Peacekeeping Operations in Resolving Internal Conflicts, a previously mentioned source, p. 134.

<sup>21</sup> MINE ACTION AND PEACE MEDIATION, GENEVA INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR HUMANITARIAN DEMINING AND, SWISSPEACE, Available on: [https://www.gichd.org/fileadmin/GICHD-resources/rec-documents/GICHD-Mine-Action-and-Peace-Mediation\\_web.pdf](https://www.gichd.org/fileadmin/GICHD-resources/rec-documents/GICHD-Mine-Action-and-Peace-Mediation_web.pdf) p 11.

<sup>22</sup> MINE ACTION AND PEACE MEDIATION, Op. Cit, p 13.

<sup>23</sup> Private information obtained by the researcher from the General Directorate of Explosive Control – Popular Mobilization Authority on 05/12/2022.

(1250) secondary street, (2150) car bombs, destruction of (25,980) explosive devices, disinfection of (2350) km<sup>2</sup> of farms, destruction of (4210) projectiles used for explosives, disinfection (350) villages, destroying (150) cylinders filled with toxic materials, disinfecting and destroying (100) explosive manufacturing factories, destroying (1500) explosive belts, disinfecting and destroying (560) tunnels <sup>(24)</sup>.

### **Second: Hatra Operations 2017:**

In Hatra Operations, the Explosive Control Directorate participated in the four axes: north, south, east and west of Hatra. The Field Engineering Directorate was able to purify all villages and houses with an area of (4636) square kilometers, which are as follows: clearing (18) villages, (247) booby-trapped houses, dismantling (25) Car bombs, clearing (15) government buildings, (12) main streets, (36) secondary streets, dismantling and removing (250) explosive devices, clearing (70) kilometers of agricultural land, removing (17) booby-trapped piles, destroying (1) manufacturing plant and (1) poison cylinder <sup>(25)</sup>.

### **Third: Operations of Muhammad, Messenger of God 2017:**

The explosive control work in the operations of Muhammad the Messenger of God extended from the Old Musk areas to the Syrian borders, which are difficult areas due to the many loopholes supporting the enemy. The field engineering participated in liberating the area and then clearing it. The total amount of explosives control accomplished is (13897) square kilometers, including: Clearing (10000) homes, (53) villages, (80) government buildings, (150) main streets, (800) secondary streets, (1000) car bombs will be enough for you, (10785) explosive devices destroyed, (500) kilometers of farms cleared, (5) general hospital, (15) medical clinics, clearing the border desert completely of explosives and mines, destroying (280) tunnels, destroying (20) poisonous cylinders, and (40) bomb-making factories <sup>(26)</sup>.

### **Fourth: Nineveh Operations 2018:**

These operations cover the liberation of the West Nineveh (Al-Ba'aj) axis; To preserve the lives of civilians and facilitate their return to their homes, the engineering field has completed the following: clearing (1536) homes, (50) villages, (88) government buildings, (150) main streets in addition to a distance of (325) kilometers, (251) sub-streets, (480) km farms, processing and dismantling (115) car bombs, (942) explosive devices, destroying (810) booby-trapped piles, (498) mines, (49) poisonous cylinders, (41) booby-trapping and manufacturing labs, (80) tunnels, and (60) explosive belts <sup>(27)</sup>.

### **Fifth: Securing Oil Network Lines:**

At the request of the Ministry of Oil in 2017, to protect the oil tracks and human cadres, as ISIS had booby-trapped and planted explosives to cause the greatest harm to public money and lives, field engineering began to remove mines and dismantle the canisters while maintaining the integrity of the oil pipelines and ensuring the flow of oil. The explosives in this operation include: Lifting (250) suppressive devices, (70) high explosive oxygen cylinders, (345) devices, (199) anti-personnel devices, (560) war grenades, (180) assorted mines <sup>(28)</sup>.

### **Sixth: Will of Victory Operations 2019:**

The Will of Victory operations were launched in all operations sectors on 9/7/2019, in the Nineveh operations axis (west of Mosul operations), the explosive control achieved the following: Clearing Sinjar district - Qayrawan district - Tal Afar district - areas on the right side of Mosul, clearing villages (Al-Shouta, Tal Asfour, Zarnouk, Shiger Alia, Lazakah, West Al-Waah, Tel Khima, Al-Baghla) in addition to (20) villages completely cleared, (800) houses, (10) government buildings, (25) main streets, (47) sub-streets, destroyed (1000) explosive devices, (78) mines, (25) poison cylinders, (19) manufacturing plants, (10) additives, (22)

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<sup>24</sup> Private information obtained by the researcher from the General Directorate of Explosive Control – Popular Mobilization Authority on 05/12/2022.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Private information obtained by the researcher from the General Directorate of Explosive Control – Popular Mobilization Authority on 05/12/2022

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Private information obtained by the researcher from the General Directorate of Explosive Control – Popular Mobilization Authority on 05/12/2022



tunnels, disinfection (450) cultivated lands, (30) manual pomegranates, (8) Ordnance containers, (2) portable devices, treatment (175) explosive belts and (6) car bombs <sup>(29)</sup>.

Seventh: Nineveh 2020:

The Directorate of Explosives Control launched based on the call of the Nineveh Operations Command / Popular Mobilization Forces to clear and remove mines and remnants of war, as follows: Clearing (17) villages, (1) government building, (2) houses, (61) streets, (4) valleys, (5) areas, (17) tunnels, (16) add-ons, destruction of (2) booby-trapped piles, and (13) explosive devices <sup>(30)</sup>.

Eighth: Nineveh 2021:

The explosive control accomplished the following, based on the call of the Nineveh Operational Command/Popular Mobilization Forces, which are as follows: Clearing (640) homes, (20) villages, (30) streets, and (5) government buildings. Destroying (80) add-ons and tunnels, (10) stacking military projectiles, (290) homemade bombs, (1257) military projectiles. Based on the above, it can be summarized what the Explosive Control Directorate accomplished from 2014-2021 in the following countries <sup>(31)</sup>:

**Table (7) Achievements of the Directorate of Explosive Control in Nineveh**

| Axis                              | Year            | Houses | Villages | Government Buildings | Main Streets | Booby-trapped Cars | Explosive Devices | Farms | Ballistic Stacks |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|--------|----------|----------------------|--------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------|------------------|
| #WeAreComing Nineveh              | 2016            | 5000   | 350      | 510                  | 150          | 2150               | 25980             | 2350  | 4360             |
| Hatra Operations                  | 2017            | 247    | 18       | 15                   | 12           | 25                 | 250               | 70    | 31               |
| 2nd Messenger of God Operations   | 2017            | 10000  | 53       | 80                   | 150          | 1000               | 10785             | 500   | 2920             |
| Nineveh                           | 2018            | 1536   | 50       | 88                   | 150          | 115                | 1440              | 480   | 859              |
| Nineveh Pipeline                  | 2018            |        |          |                      |              |                    | 974               |       | 560              |
| #WillofVictory Operations         | 2019            | 450    | 37       | 20                   | 20           | 3                  | 70                | 130   | 2072             |
| Nineveh                           | 2019            | 800    | 20       | 10                   | 25           | 6                  | 1228              | 400   | 958              |
| Nineveh                           | 2020            | 2      | 22       | 1                    | 61           |                    | 13                |       | 150              |
| Nineveh                           | 2021            | 640    |          | 5                    | 30           |                    | 290               | 110   | 1257             |
| Damaged ISIS Remnants and Weapons | From -2014 2020 |        |          |                      |              |                    | 649               |       | 8560             |
| Total                             |                 | 18675  | 729      | 550                  | 598          | 3299               | 41679             | 4040  | 21727            |

A review of the demining operations carried out by the Directorate of Military Engineering shows that operations related to the removal of war remnants in all its forms are not subject to the period of the conflict, or to what military tactics require. It also shows the work for humanitarian purposes by clearing homes, residential areas, and government departments.

All this takes place in the framework of peacekeeping operations.

## **6- Directorate of Combating Extremism:**

Responding to conflicts or their effects requires emergency planning and rapid action. For the most part, this rapid and emergency action aims to meet basic human needs, such as distributing relief aid, providing food, providing housing, and others. Distributing humanitarian aid without paying attention to addressing tensions between groups leads to feelings of hatred and mistrust. Doubt is aggravated again, working to address this confused situation between groups and calm the general atmosphere is equivalent to what is given to relief, medical and security efforts of importance, and if this importance is not given to them from the beginning, the situation may return to setback again, because the latent hatreds give way to open conflicts, and constitute important and difficult obstacles to the process of physical reconstruction <sup>(32)</sup>.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Private information obtained by the researcher from the General Directorate of Explosive Control - Popular Mobilization Authority on 05/12/2022

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Antonia Chase and Martha Mina, *Imagining Coexistence Together - The Renewal of Humanity After Violent Ethnic Conflict*, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

In this important aspect, the Popular Mobilization Forces established the Directorate for Combating Extremism, and its activities are carried out in the liberated areas. We will present its activities on the website of our study <sup>(33)</sup>:

**Table (7) Achievements of the Directorate of Combating Extremism in Nineveh**

| Year | Visits and meetings | Festival | Organizing and participating in seminars | Conducting Workshops | Social Activities | Attending or conducting night meetings | Religious Activities | Sports activities | Other Activities         |
|------|---------------------|----------|--|----------------------|-------------------|--|----------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| 2021 | 35                  | 2        | 6  | 2                    | 10s of meetings   | 10s of meetings                        | 10s of meetings      | 1                 | Miscellaneous Activities |
| 2022 | 20                  | 2        | 18                                       | 1                    | 10s of meetings   | 10s of meetings                        | 10s of meetings      | 1                 | Miscellaneous Activities |

**The table is from the researcher's work based on the information she obtained from the Directorate of Combating Extremism in Nineveh**

The visits and meetings conducted by the Department of Combating Extremism include: (The Association of Scholars in Iraq, Sheikhs and Notables of Nineveh Governorate, Service and Security Departments, Councils Responsible for Families and Families of Mosul). As for the festivals, they are related to special events in the governorate or to the Popular Mobilization Forces, while the workshops held or participating in the Directorate of Combating Extremism vary, but most of them remain related to extremism: extremism and its concept and combating it, family building, the dangers of fireworks, domestic violence and its effects on society, empowering women While the workshops targeted intellectual security and dialogue sessions about the neighborhoods of Mosul, the social activities were mediating conflicts and undertaking reconciliation operations in the liberated areas. The evenings dealt with various issues and according to the conditions of the governorate, and were more active in the month of Ramadan. Religious activities were distributed between weekly religious lessons, sermons on religious occasions, visiting shrines and bishops, sports activities, which are the establishment of football tournaments, and there are dozens of other activities such as cooperation with representatives of minorities, activists, interest and cooperation with departments responsible for women and children, cooperation With the American organization in the field of human rights, participation in the afforestation of Mosul forests, the opening of mosques, hospice and churches, awareness teams and campaigns to support homes for the elderly, and everything that goes in the way of establishing peace and coexistence in Nineveh <sup>(34)</sup>.

## Conclusion

Ensuring that the Popular Mobilization Forces can build peace requires that the great work they are doing be coupled with good governance and behavior in liberated areas. In addition to observing the privacy of society within the governorate, not giving preference to some minorities over others, and avoiding provoking them, even if it was unintentional. This requires training the cadres and members of the Popular Mobilization Forces, introducing them to the existing community diversity, and the need to respect and protect it, and take a greater role in the participation of Nineveh residents in their official occasions to show openness to all components, provided that it takes place smoothly and without attracting the attention of minorities. Building peace and not returning to conflict again means restoring citizens' trust in the security services, and thus, everyone will be effective and effective actors in maintaining security in Nineveh.

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