

# Inside Iraqi Politics

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## *Strategic Intelligence on Iraq...*

### *Politics, Political Risk & Political Economy*

*Inside Iraqi Politics* provides insight in English from Arabic sources on key issues at the nexus of politics and security, foreign investment, socio-economic stability and regional relations. Its contents draw on sources taken from Iraqi, pan-Arab and international sources. IIP is a publication of **Uticensis Risk Services**, a provider of open source insight on the Arab world. Distribution is legally restricted to subscribers, although excerpts may be quoted with attribution consistent with copyright.

## **This Issue's Top Stories**

- ***The National Scene:*** Prime Minister Maliki's move to create new provinces in areas which are already hotly contested seems aimed at creating a new Shia province in Turkoman-dominated Telafar and buffers against the Kurds both in Ninawa and Salah al-Din. What the new provinces, the new budget and Maliki's move against Diyala's governor have in common is they show a hardened line with the Kurds. Maliki has also continued to press Sunni opponents with arrest warrants despite reversing course over the budget when pressured by Shia provinces. Despite some remaining obstacles, the budget will likely pass, but its expansion relies on shaky assumptions.
- ***Provincial Focus:*** Basra-led opposition forced Maliki to reverse course after cutting "petrodollar" funding for oil producing provinces from \$5/barrel to \$1. This article also reviews Basra's claims about the negative impact of the oil industry on development, agriculture, air and water, as well as counterclaims from non-producing Shia provinces that they are now deprived.
- ***Provincial Focus:*** New Diyala Governor Amer Salman Yaqub al-Majmai has taken office amid a shadowy series of maneuvers by councilmen loyal to Maliki and the Badr Organization to split Sunnis over the previous government's ties to the Kurds. Omar al-Humayri of Speaker Nujayfi's Mutahidun, who still claims to be governor, is stranded in Kurdish-controlled Khanaqin out of fear that an arrest warrant for corruption will be executed against him. The new government has accused Humaryi of reaching a "secret pact" with the Kurds to surrender northern Diyala to Kurdistan.
- ***For the Record:*** Covers events from Jan. 18 to Jan. 31.

# The National Scene

## New Provinces' Move Adds New Crisis

The cabinet's moves to create five new provinces have stirred new crises in the ethnically-mixed areas and could allow Prime Minister *Nuri al-Maliki* to attract Turkoman support while creating a Shia province in the north. Maliki retreated from Shia pressure over the "petrodollar" issue even while escalating against Sunni rivals.

The cabinet voted on Jan. 21 to create four new provinces, two from the heavily Turkoman districts of Tuz Khurmatu and Talafar, and also in Fallujah and in the Christian-majority Ninawa Plains. It approved Talafar as a bill, while the others it approved "in principle" after further study.<sup>1</sup> On Jan. 14, the cabinet had approved a bill making Halabja a province, making it the fourth Kurdistan region province.<sup>2</sup> The Jan. 21 decisions met strong support from Turkoman,<sup>3</sup> who have long demanded autonomy ([video](#)), and fervent denunciations from Sunni Arabs and Kurds. Their location would weaken Ninawa and might create buffers against Kurdish expansion.

This has increased tensions in Ninawa and Salah al-Din. Ninawa Governor **Uthil al-Nujayfi** has condemned the Talafar plan as an effort "to shorten the road between Syria and Iran."<sup>4</sup> Indeed Maliki's motive may be the creation of a Shia province in the north. Nujayfi has also suggested that the proposal will increase tensions between Sunni and Shia Turkoman in Talafar, as well as with the area's Arabs and Yazidis ([video](#)). Both Salah al-Din Governor **Ahmad al-Jiburi** and its council condemned the proposal,<sup>5</sup> as did Tuz Khurmatu's own Kurdish-dominated local administration.<sup>6</sup>

The 2014 budget bill faced an obstacle when (mostly Shia) oil-producing provinces protested an 80 percent cut from their "petrodollar" budget, a \$5/barrel bonus awarded to provinces for either production or refining. A campaign led by Basra Governor **Majid al-Nasrawi**, described in the *Provincial Focus* below, led Maliki to reverse course.

The petrodollar hurdle cleared, the budget still faced boycotts from the Kurds over the budget's contents, and from Speaker **Osama al-Nujayfi**'s Sunni *Mutahidun* over Anbar. Of the three sessions in the past two weeks, parliament initially failed to make quorum in the Jan. 28 session but convened later, made quorum on Jan. 29, but failed on Jan. 30 with Mutahidun and the Kurds absent. Past boycotts have always failed, and Nujayfi's Feb. 1 call for his MPs to return reflects the fact that their provinces need the funds.<sup>7</sup>

The Kurds, faced with Baghdad's determination to defund the Kurdish region (*IIP 77/3, 7-9*), appear to be backing down as well. They halted oil exports to Turkey on or before Jan. 25, according to the *Iraq Oil Report*,<sup>8</sup> and on Feb. 1 reportedly agreed to put the

budget on the schedule.<sup>9</sup> Now that we have the text of the budget rather than leaks, it is clear what a threat this was to Irbil: provisions from 2013 allowing Baghdad to cut off Kurdistan's 17 percent remain; a new provision (Article 23) closing off the possibility of federal payments for KRG oil contractors was added; and the KRG's expected production was set at 400,000 (as previously reported), which is technically impossible.

	2014	2013	2012	2011
<b>Spending</b>	\$139.8B	\$119.2B	\$100.5B	\$83.5B
• <b>Oil/Energy</b>	\$27.5	\$25.4	\$17.6	-
• <b>Social Services</b>	\$22.2	\$15.3	\$13.3	-
• <b>Defense</b>	\$20.27	\$17.0	\$14.7	-
<b>Revenue</b>	\$119.5	\$102.8B	\$87.8B	\$70B
<b>Oil Price</b>	\$90	\$90	\$85	\$76.5
<b>Project Production</b>	3.4 million bpd	2.9M	2.6M	2.2M

*Al-Sabah* published the draft budget on Jan. 21: [text](#). All spending figures are in billions of dollars, and reflect projections rather than results. The categories were classified differently in 2011. Use year-over-year figures for comparative purposes since the currency conversion rate has fluctuated slightly. See *IIP* 9, 33, 57 for past budgets.

The budget will be passed, but disputes about who gets more ignore Iraq's vulnerability to oil price decline, something likely given the end of the US *Federal Reserve's* "quantitative-easing,"<sup>10</sup> the shale gas boom, and the emerging markets' downturn. At three million bpd, the petrodollar provision increases the budget by \$1.095 billion for every dollar, so Maliki's reversal increases the budget by \$4.4 billion. Add in some shortfall from Kurdistan's 400,000 barrels, and revenue should also fall short.

*Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK)* leader **Barham Salih** resigned his leadership position on Feb. 1 in order to pressure party leaders to speed up selection of a successor for **Jalal Talabani**, who was incapacitated by a stroke in Dec. 2012.<sup>11</sup> Salih's move came just two days after party leaders had agreed to appoint him, **Kosrat Rasul**, and Talabani's wife **Hero Ibrahim Ahmed** as temporary managers of the party's affairs.<sup>12</sup>

Maliki has taken advantage of the crisis in Anbar to issue an arrest warrant against one of his most vocal media critics, *al-Mada* columnist **Sarmad al-Tai**. An arrest warrant dated Jan. 8 ([text](#), [text](#)) was scantily filled out, with many spaces on the form left blank. It summoned Tai to appear at the "Press and Media Affairs Court" on charges of slander, and as *Al-Baghdadia* host **Anwar al-Hamdani** noted, it does not even print his name in proper legal fashion.<sup>13</sup> Tai has continued to write defiantly,<sup>14</sup> and a Facebook group formed to support him has about 1,300 members.<sup>15</sup>

## Insurgency Stalemate Burns On

Security forces appear to have the upper hand in Anbar fighting but are holding back from storming Fallujah. Maliki warned on Jan. 29 there was "not much time left" for negotiations,<sup>16</sup> yet military commanders say they have yet to set a time for an attack.<sup>17</sup>

Deputy Council Chairman **Salih al-Isawi** says that negotiations for a peaceful resolution have collapsed, and that 75 percent of residents have fled. Humanitarian aid is blocked from the city at checkpoints, but is often able to get around them and into the city.<sup>18</sup> Many civilians have been killed in the shelling.<sup>19</sup> The Abu Alwan tribe<sup>20</sup> (the arrest of MP **Ahmad al-Alwani** helped set off the crisis) and Speaker Nujayfi<sup>21</sup> have broadcast ceasefire initiatives requiring military withdrawal, but neither has gained traction, and their announcement via television suggests a lack of real negotiations.

Anbar Governor **Ahmad Khalaf al-Dhiyabi** has held to his support for federal security, meeting on Jan. 30 with some tribal and religious figures to reaffirm opposition to any violence against security forces. They also pointedly rejected claims by **Ali Hatem Sulayman** that he is the “prince” of the Dulaym, Anbar’s largest tribal confederation ([video](#)). On the ground, however, low-level fighting has continued in Malab and some other neighborhoods of Ramadi,<sup>22</sup> and Iraq’s modest oil exports of about 10,000 barrels a day to Jordan have been cut off due to security conditions in Anbar.<sup>23</sup>

In contrast to his petrodollar retreat in the face of Shia criticism, Maliki has intensified pressure on Sunnis who oppose him. Sunni clerical opposition leaders, whose political stances are often absolutist but who are religiously mainstream, are the main targets, with Shaykh **Mahmud al-Ani**, head of the *Iraqi Ulema Council*, and Shaykh **Abd al-Sattar Abd al-Jabbar**, a leading member of the *Fiqh Society*, arrested in Baghdad. We also noted (*IIP* 77/3) a warrant for Samarra’s Shaykh **Muhammad Taha Hamdun**, the national spokesman for the protest movement, and he has now fled to Kurdistan.<sup>24</sup>

## Provincial Focus

### Basra Wins Fight For Oil Revenue Share

**Pressure from predominately Shia oil producing provinces, led by Basra, caused the cabinet to back down from reducing the “petrodollar” bonus , citing negative side effects to the oil industry. But now non-producers want more money as well.**

The 2014 budget bill proposed by the cabinet on Jan. 15 ([text](#)) contained a provision reducing the bonus given to oil producing provinces from \$5 per barrel produced or refined to \$1. The petrodollar bonus was first introduced in 2010 and increased from \$1 to \$5 by the revised provinces law ([text](#)) passed last June (*IIP* 64/2). Oil-producing provinces had been counting on a major windfall: Basra, which produces a majority of Iraq’s oil, passed a \$13 billion development budget for 2014.<sup>25</sup>

Basra Governor **Majid al-Nasrawi**, of the *Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI)*, had made defending the petrodollar a cornerstone of his policy even before the budget proposal. He threatened on Dec. 17 that the province would shut down all oil exports in the event that the federal government did not allocate \$5 for every barrel of oil extracted

from Basra.<sup>26</sup> The threat was almost certainly impossible to implement. But it indicated Nasrawi's adoption of the petrodollar cause as his own, and in fact he suffered a heart attack on Jan. 13 while visiting Baghdad, reportedly during a heated budget argument with acting Finance Minister **Safa al-Din al-Safi**.<sup>27</sup> Nasrawi underwent a coronary catheterization in Kuwait,<sup>28</sup> but returned to Basra Jan. 21 to promise a crowd of well-wishers that he would continue the fight for the petrodollar.<sup>29</sup>

Basra politicians united across party lines to hold a Jan. 25 conference with representatives from seven oil-producing provinces (Maysan, Dhi Qar, Wasit, Baghdad, Salah al-Din, Kirkuk and Basra) along with MPs from parliament's Energy and Regions Committees.<sup>30</sup> One of the first backers of proposed conference was provincial council Chairman **Khalaf Abd al-Samad** of Maliki's *State of Law Coalition (SLC)*.<sup>31</sup> Also present were Nasrawi and Sadrist Deputy Governor **Muhammad al-Tamimi**. The conference concluded with calls for parliament to vote down the budget, and a threat to file a lawsuit to overturn the petrodollar cuts.<sup>32</sup> SLC breakaway MP **Jawad al-Bazuni** claimed that 50 MPs would vote down the budget to protest the cuts.<sup>33</sup>

Southern pressure achieved its goal and Maliki reversed course. On Jan. 22 Maliki was still defending the change, arguing in his weekly address that the provinces would receive \$5 per barrel when they prove capable of managing large projects.<sup>34</sup> But Jan. 28 the cabinet reversed its decision, restoring the \$5/barrel funding.<sup>35</sup> He may have been swayed by his allies in Basra, not one of whom would openly defend the petrodollar cut from the pressure they faced. Abd al-Samad complained he was not invited to the conference despite his support,<sup>36</sup> and **Sabah al-Bazuni**, the head of the SLC in Basra, complained they had received notice only by text message the morning it was held.<sup>37</sup> Abd al-Samad was finally reduced to alleging, bizarrely, that the conference was organized to distract attention from "the army's victories against terrorism in Anbar."<sup>38</sup>

### Basrawis Emphasize Oil Industry's Negative Impact

Supporters of the petrodollar budget argue that the funds compensate provinces for economic and environmental damages caused by the oil industry. MP Bazuni, the SLC breakaway, claims that the Oil Ministry controls 80 percent of the land in Basra province, lands which are not available for provincial development projects.<sup>39</sup> The industry's legal framework allows the Oil Ministry to use Baath-era laws, including the Conservation of Hydrocarbon Resources Law of 1985, to seize land.<sup>40</sup> Governor Nasrawi claimed in November 2013 that his administration was forced to build schools on federal land because the federal government held so much territory.<sup>41</sup>

Petrodollar advocates also point to oil's negative impact on agriculture. In the Zubayr district in western Basra, the ministry has seized 150 tomato farms over the past several years, and farmers say they are being pressured to accept paltry compensation for their land.<sup>42</sup> **Akram Niema**, chairman of the *Zubayr Farming Association*, claims that land seizures at oil fields over the past years have reduced agricultural production by more

than 40 percent.<sup>42</sup> Councilman **Muhsin Abd al-Hay** claims that more than 4,000 acres of farmland have been seized.<sup>43</sup> Abd al-Hay also accuses the Oil Ministry of contributing to desertification by cutting down trees, filling in irrigation canals, and denying permits needed for the province's "Green Belt" anti-desertification initiative.<sup>44</sup>

Basrawis also cite air pollution. **Shukri al-Musawi**, a professor at the *University of Basra*, says that air pollution has reached dangerous levels, especially in Zubayr. **Arif Adil Hamud**, the chief health official in Zubayr's Shuayba sub-district, blames the smoke rising from oil fields for dozens of cases of respiratory ailments.<sup>45</sup> The problem has gotten so bad that some residents of Shuayba have moved away, while others are threatening to hold sit-in protests and block roads over the issue.<sup>46</sup>

Zubayr district, home to the Zubayr and Rumaila oil fields, is not the only area whose residents complain of the oil industry's negative impact. Farmers in the Mudayna district of northern Basra say that the government is trying to force them out by canceling their land leases, although the *Southern Oil Company (SOC)* denies this.<sup>47</sup>

Oil-related pollution has also extended to Basra's famous Shatt al-Arab waterway. According to the Environment Ministry, crude oil has leaked into the waterway through pipeline failures, negligent loading and unloading practices, and the sinking of some smaller boats used to transport oil in place of larger, more reliable tankers.<sup>48</sup> Dr. **Talib Abbas** of the University of Basra's *Ocean Studies Center* says that the Shatt al-Arab faces a mass die-off of aquatic fauna, and that a successful clean-up effort would take 25 years to implement. However, no such clean-up plans yet exist.<sup>49</sup>

## Petrodollar Envy Strikes the South

The successful petrodollar struggle has produced a jealous reaction from the non-oil producing provinces of the south, whose governments are demanding additional funds to bring them to parity with the petrodollar beneficiaries. Qadisiya Governor **Ammar al-Madani** led a conference in Diwaniya on Jan. 11 which was attended by governors from Karbala, Babil, Muthanna, and Najaf. They argued that development funds should be given out on the basis of each province's level of poverty and the effectiveness of its government at administering development projects, regardless of its oil production.<sup>50</sup>

The Diwaniya conference seems to have begun as an SLC political maneuver to provide cover for the petrodollar cut, but its demands have taken on a life of their own, possibly creating a new headache for Maliki. The five participating governors are all Maliki allies, yet some backers of the Diwaniya conference are continuing their struggle even after Maliki's reversal. MP **Ihsan al-Awadi**, a Qadisiya MP from the SLC who has his own bloc in the council, has threatened that Qadisiya MPs will vote against the budget if non-oil producing provinces are not given their "fair share" of the country's oil profits.<sup>51</sup> Maliki may be forced to find a way to budget additional funds for Shia provinces ahead of April's parliamentary elections.

## Provincial Focus

### Diyala: Provincial Scheme Removes Kurd-Allied Sunni

**The Shia bloc in Diyala has engineered the removal of a governor with a Sunni Arab-Sadrism-Kurd coalition by giving a defecting councilman the governorship. Governor Omar al-Humayri may retain majority council support, but he has lost the capital. The removal seems unrelated to Diyala's ongoing street-level sectarian violence.**

Governor Humayri, of Speaker **Osama al-Nujayfi's** *Mutahidun*, has faced legal challenges ever since his reelection last June 19 by an 18-seat coalition of Sunnis, Kurds, and Sadrists (IIP 67/5). Humayri's opponents alleged his election violated procedural rules, but their legal challenge seemed stalled until Jan. 2, when 15 of 29 council members chose a new chairman, **Muthanna al-Tamimi** of the *Badr Organization*. Later that day it chose **Amer Salman Yaqub al-Majmai** as the new governor.<sup>52</sup>

Humayri was the incumbent governor in April's provincial election and national media have habitually referred to him as "governor" since then, yet his reelection never had clear legal footing, although there is no reason to doubt he received a majority council vote. As we noted last August (IIP 67/5), at that point the council had still not had a meeting recognized by all as legal, since the Shia bloc claimed it lacked notice of the one reelecting Humayri. In early October, Diyala's Court of First Instance ruled the June 19 meeting invalid, and *al-Zaman* quoted Majmai at that time as speaking as if he had turned against Humayri,<sup>53</sup> despite both being part of *Diyala Iraqiya*, the provincial coalition led by Mutahidun but including other factions. Majmai's affiliation is notable because he belongs not to Mutahidun but to *Diyala for its People*,<sup>54</sup> a two-seat faction headed by MP **Abdullah Hassan al-Jiburi**, who was Diyala's first post-2003 governor.<sup>55</sup>

Humayri was still holding office following his unrecognized reelection when two legal actions took place: on Dec. 20 the Diyala court issued a warrant for his arrest for "wasting public funds,"<sup>56</sup> and then on Dec. 29 the Administrative Court in Baghdad agreed to hear his appeal against the removal decision. Although Humayri reacted as if the latter were a victory, it may have been the trigger that led to his removal.<sup>57</sup>

Humayri's opponents were not going to wait for a court,<sup>58</sup> and on Jan. 2 the new coalition voted itself into office. Humayri rejected the session as "illegal," and claimed the presidency refused to approve the new election.<sup>59</sup> On Jan. 30, Humayri claimed to have been "reelected" by a unanimous vote of 16 council members in Khanaqin, the northern Diyala city controlled by the Kurdish region.<sup>60</sup> The same session reportedly also reelected Sadrism **Muhammad Jawad al-Hamdani** as council chairman, recreating the partnership that has governed the province since June. On Jan. 31, now secure in office, Chairman Tamimi called Humayri a "fugitive from justice," saying he'd been in Khanaqin since the Dec. 20 warrant, and demanded the Kurdish region arrest him.<sup>61</sup>

Humayri's loss, despite his majority, was partially due to splinters. The Kurdish bloc (three seats) supported Humayri, but Councilwoman **Amal Umran Ghaydan** presided over the session that elected Majmai. Though she appears to have voted against – the 15-member vote was 10-5<sup>62</sup> – she and three members of *Iraqiya Diyala* allowed the session to make quorum.<sup>63</sup> (Another Kurd, **Ali Karim Agha**, is now Humayri's new first deputy,<sup>64</sup> and from the numbers it appears Ghaydan returned to Khanaqin to vote for him). The three Sunnis attending were Majmai, **Ahmad Yasin al-Harbi** of Deputy PM **Salih al-Mutlak**'s faction, and **Omar al-Karwi**, like Humayri of the Nujayfi-allied *Islamic Party*. Two independents must have brought the total to 15 (the Shia bloc was reduced from 12 to nine by the Sadrists siding with Humayri's Khanaqin government).

The “Kurdish issue” was an important wedge. Karwi, a Sunni who became the new deputy chairman, alleged that Humayri had signed a “secret pact” with the Kurds to give them northern Diyala.<sup>65</sup> Shia sources trumpeted the claim.<sup>66</sup>

The other factor doing Humayri in was the institutional advantage of the Shia bloc. The Administrative Court is part of the Justice Ministry, and thus subject to the executive. And on Feb. 2, Vice-President **Khudayr al-Khuzai**, acting in the place of Iraq's hospitalized Kurdish president, **Jalal Talabani**, issued a decree recognizing Majmai.<sup>67</sup> Whether Humayri is corrupt or not, with the security services on Majmai's side, he is likely to end up as another Sunni Arab politician exiled to Iraqi Kurdistan.

### Low-Level Sectarian Violence Defies Reconciliation Efforts

Meanwhile, sectarian violence continues to boil. The past year has seen hundreds of Sunni families flee from Muqdadiya.<sup>68</sup> Meanwhile dozens of Shia families of the Sukuk clan of the Shamar tribe fled from the western outskirts of Baquba,<sup>69</sup> a troubled area where the *Islamic State of Iraq (ISIS)* is strong enough to threaten barbers who perform Western-style haircuts.<sup>70</sup>

Recent violence has included a wave of assassinations and arrests of Sunni religious leaders, possibly revenge for attacks on Shia. Six Sunni imams were killed in 2013.<sup>71</sup> On Jan. 21, the Diyala Sunni Waqf's media director was murdered in Wajhiya.<sup>72</sup> The killing might have been intended as revenge for the killing of an *Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI)* spokesman in Khalis the previous month.<sup>73</sup> A Sunni preacher was arrested in Abu Khanazir Jan. 25 after an attack on a neighboring Shia village left six people dead. The preacher's mosque was reportedly burned to the ground by men wearing military uniforms, a fate that several Sunni mosques have shared recently.<sup>74</sup>

The violence has had no clear impact on the province's political process. The Sunni Waqf tried to close mosques in November to protest the violence, but backed down at Humayri's request (*IIP* 74/2). Media sources cite both Badr's Tamimi<sup>75</sup> and security sources as saying that 30-40 percent of the killings are motivated by personal rivalries.<sup>76</sup>



# For the Record

## Iraqi Politics Jan. 18 – Jan. 31

This is a timeline of key political events taking place during the period covered by this issue. It is primarily focused on the actions of parliament and the prime minister; key parliamentary committee meetings and events related to other important political or institutional actors may be included.

**Jan. 19:** Maliki distributes 3,000 residential land deeds in Dhi Qar and calls on parliament to pass a bill to build more residential units.<sup>77</sup> In his speech, Maliki blames the Anbar protest movement for paving the way for al-Qaeda's return to the province. His speech is briefly interrupted by an interlude of colloquial poetry praising him ([video](#)).

**Jan. 20:** Maliki sends a cable to interim Egyptian President Adly Mansour congratulating his country on the passage of its constitutional referendum.<sup>78</sup>

**Jan. 21:** The cabinet meets and agrees to continue providing emergency assistance to Anbar and assigns the Agriculture Ministry to send free Grade A dates as food relief. It allocates two billion dinars to the Red Crescent Society from the 2014 emergency budget, and provides an additional month's worth of Public Distribution System (PDS) foodstuffs to Anbar. It approves in principle converting the districts of Tuz Khurmatu, Fallujah and Ninawa Plains to provinces, and it approves the formation of a committee headed by Minister of State for Provincial Affairs Turhan Mufti with representatives from the Justice and Municipalities Ministries. The cabinet exempts the staff of the public company manufacturing fertilizer in the southern region from a 2013 cabinet resolution to allow it to sell plots of land in Zubayr directly to the employees at cost and without normal public auction procedures. It applies the same exception to public oil companies in the province (i.e. the Southern Oil Company), which own residential land and wish to sell it to their employees. The cabinet then approves a bill on the establishment of a Talafar province and a bill ratifying the convention establishing a ministerial council of trade between Iraq and the United Kingdom. It authorizes the Construction and Housing Ministry to provide a \$25,000 contribution to the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) for its activities in Iraq. It includes an emergency hospital in Tuz Khurmatu in the Health Ministry's 2014 projects, exempting it from government contracting regulations, while approving incentive pay for doctors in the violence-stricken district: 1,500,000 dinars per month for specialists and 750,000 dinars per month for practitioners. It approves the construction of 130 schools in the plains region of Maysan, Dhi Qar and Basra by the Construction and Housing Ministry to complete the projects, with the cabinet secretariat to settle all outstanding debts. The cabinet exempts the project from regulations and invites an unnamed "group of companies" to complete the schools. The cabinet also cancels the requirement to reserve residential land for five years for those injured by terrorist attacks under a 2009 law for compensation of martyrs of terrorism. It increases Iraq's contribution to the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa by \$99.9 million, to be paid in five annual installments of \$19.97 million, and also authorizes the Commerce Ministry to treat closing date for ration card tenders as a work day even if it falls on a holiday. It authorizes Transportation Ministry agent Abdullah Rikani to negotiate air transport agreements with Morocco, Tunisia, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, the United Arab

Emirates, Qatar, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Italy, Latvia and China. In light of the impact of numerous days off on the education system, the cabinet decides to hold classes on Saturdays.<sup>79</sup>

**Jan. 22:** Maliki meets with Croatian Defense Minister Ante Kotromanovic about developing security and economic ties. He thanks Croatia for its support in Iraq's fight against terrorism.<sup>80</sup>

In his weekly address, Maliki asks Fallujah residents to expel foreign fighters from the city. He praises the initiative to create new provinces, while also assuring audience that he will not "move hastily" and will follow all proper legal procedures. Maliki says that \$5 petrodollar budget bonus will be implemented once provinces are capable of spending the funds ([video](#)).

**Jan. 24:** Maliki condemns the terrorist attacks in Egypt and expresses his government's solidarity with Egypt in fighting the terrorist threat.<sup>81</sup>

**Jan. 25:** As part of the National Housing Initiative, Maliki declares that he will keep distributing land deeds until every citizen has housing.<sup>82</sup> He calls for the process of selecting appropriate low-cost housing models to be expedited to begin construction ([video](#)).

**Jan. 26:** In a televised phone call, Maliki congratulates the Iraqi Olympic soccer team on their victory over Saudi Arabia. Team coach Hakim Shaker tells Maliki the team is proud of him and his "victories over ISIS" and refers to the team as "your sons" ([video](#)).

**Jan. 28:** Parliament meets ([parliamentary schedule](#)) with 191 MPs present. It passes the [Amended Law on Judicial Organization No. 160 of 1979](#), and 23 out of 157 articles of the labor bill, while rejecting the formation of a committee to monitor the work of the Iraqi High Electoral Commission (IHEC). Speaker Nujayfi postpones the first reading of the federal budget bill after Kurdish MPs threatened to walkout and break quorum. Parliament also completes a reading of a bill on the fight against drugs and psychotropic substances, and discusses a preliminary report of the special committee investigating the expired biscuit shipment intended for Iraqi schools as part of a World Food Program initiative. According to the report, Jordanian officials provided evidence that the WFP has committed a violation of food safety standards and should bear the cost, in addition to changing its procurement policy to directly contract with Iraqi food manufacturers. The committee intends to provide a final report soon.<sup>83</sup>

The cabinet meets and approves an amendment to the 2014 federal budget bill restoring petrodollar funding for provinces to \$5 a barrel, with the Central Bank of Iraq to purchase treasury bills to fund the additional outlay. It agrees to make revenues from border crossings available to provinces not covered by the petrodollar program. It authorizes the Finance Ministry to transfer funds within the budget among different outlays and headings, with the exception of funds allocated for development projects, and on condition that funds allocated for capital investments not be spent on routine expenses. It awards ten million dinars and plots of land in their hometowns to members of the Iraqi Olympic soccer team for winning the under 22 age division of the Asia Cup. The cabinet then emphasizes the need to implement the 2013 resolution providing 20 billion dinars in support to Anbar province. It agrees to allow construction companies and contractors that have failed to complete any projects to renew their licenses one time only. The cabinet furthermore decides to contribute \$500,000 to the trust fund established by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to cover the costs of transferring MEK

members from Camp Liberty. It approves the formation of a committee to make recommendations on the division of revenue for producing and non-producing oil provinces, headed by the president of the advisers body, Thamer Ghadban, and composed of Kathim al-Hasani of the Commerce Ministry, Najla Ali Murad of the Planning Ministry, Hasan Murad of the Oil Ministry, and unnamed representatives from the Finance Ministry and the Kurdistan Regional Government. It agrees to hold a 45-day public auction for 3G bandwidth, with the auction price to start at \$307 million. It approves the Oil Ministry's request to dispose of 60 billion dinars worth of old and worn-out equipment used by the Company for Drilling and the Southern Oil Company. It approves the Foreign Affairs Ministry recommendation to open a Hungarian consulate in Irbil. It authorizes Justice Minister Hassan Halboss Shammari to negotiate and sign a draft cooperation agreement with the European Union to transfer sentenced prisoners. The cabinet approves a bill on identity cards for sailors. It approves the recommendation to write off Transportation Ministry generators valued at 91 million dinars and return them to the public company implementing public transport projects. Lastly the cabinet approves the recommendation from the Industry and Minerals Ministry to write off 27,000 tons of deteriorated compound fertilizer valued at 486 million dinars.<sup>84</sup>

Maliki meets with US Deputy Secretary of State William Burns and calls for greater international support to “break the backbone” of terrorism. Maliki notes that the need to avoid civilian casualties may cause delays in the government's war on terrorism.<sup>85</sup>

Maliki meets with members of the Iraqi Olympic team which won the Asian Cup and thanks them for helping unite the country and serving as a symbol of efforts to revitalize the country.<sup>86</sup>

**Jan. 29:** Maliki chairs a meeting of the High Council on Population, which includes the Ministries of Finance, Planning, and Labor, the Central Bureau of Statistics, and the Sunni and Shia Waqfs. They approve a “National Population Policy” document that includes a “comprehensive strategy to deal with population, health, education and issues related to population growth,” and an implementation plan drafted by the Planning Ministry.<sup>87</sup>

In his weekly address, Maliki warns that there is “not much time left” before Iraqi forces will have to assault Fallujah to “rescue its people” from ISIS ([video](#)). He also issues an denial of any ongoing “negotiations” with “terrorists” from al-Qaeda or ISIS in Anbar.<sup>88</sup> [This was his way of rejecting the initiative of the Albu Alwan mentioned in the *National Scene* above.]

**Jan. 30:** Parliament is scheduled to meet ([parliamentary schedule](#)), but fails to make quorum.<sup>89</sup>

Parliament's Finance Committee and Legal Committee hold a joint meeting to discuss the Unified Retirement Law.<sup>90</sup>

Maliki distributes land deeds to 709 families in the Shammaiya area of Baghdad.<sup>91</sup>

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- <sup>1</sup> "Cabinet Decisions," [Iraqi Cabinet](#), Jan. 21, 2014.
- <sup>2</sup> "The General Secretariat of the Cabinet Sends Draft Halabja Province Law to Parliament," [Iraqi Cabinet](#), Jan. 14, 2014.
- <sup>3</sup> "Arshad Salihi: Our Goal is to Create a Region within a United Iraq," [Haberler](#), Jan. 25, 2014.
- <sup>4</sup> "Nujayfi: Two New Provinces in Ninawa Are Designed to Shorten the Road Between Iran and Syria," [al-Mada Press](#), Jan. 26, 2014.
- <sup>5</sup> "Salah al-Din Council Rejects Turning Tuz into a Province and Insists: The Decision is Booby-Trapped With Political and Sectarian Motives," [al-Mada Press](#), Jan. 22, 2014.
- <sup>6</sup> "Tuz Khurmatu District Chief: Decision to Turn District Into a Province is Illegal and an Election Maneuver," [al-Sumaria News](#), Jan. 21, 2014.
- <sup>7</sup> "Nujayfi Calls for Mutahidun MPs to Return to Parliament," [al-Sumaria News](#), Feb. 1, 2014.
- <sup>8</sup> "Kurdish Exports Stop, Giving Room for Political Talks," [Iraq Oil Report](#), Jan. 30, 2014.
- <sup>9</sup> "Nujayfi Reaches Agreement with Bloc Leaders to Include Budget on Upcoming Parliament Schedule," [al-Sumaria News](#), Feb. 1, 2014.
- <sup>10</sup> "Quantitative Easing" (QE) is central banker terminology for printing money in order to stimulate economic growth. Among QE's many effects is that it inflates the global oil price since oil is traded in dollars (i.e. increasing the supply of currency for a good while holding the quantity of the good constant ensures price increases). The Fed began a "tapering" of this program recently and is expected to end it entirely some time in 2014.
- <sup>11</sup> "Barham Salih: I Will Remain a Simple Member of the PUK Until Its Fourth Conference," [A-Sharq al-Awsat](#), Feb. 2, 2014.
- <sup>12</sup> "PUK Grants Talabani's Powers to Three Party Leaders," [al-Sumaria News](#), Jan. 30, 2014.
- <sup>13</sup> "Studio 9," [al-Baghdadia](#), Jan. 30, 2014.
- <sup>14</sup> "Are You Afraid, Abu Ghraib?" by Sarmad al-Tai, [Al-Mada](#), Jan. 30, 2014.
- <sup>15</sup> "I am Sarmad Altaee," [Facebook](#), Feb. 3, 2014.
- <sup>16</sup> "Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki's Weekly Address," [Prime Minister's Office](#), Jan. 29, 2014.
- <sup>17</sup> "Iraqi Ministry of Defense Announces Killing of Dozens From ISIS, But Denies Setting a Time For Fallujah Assault," [a-Sharq al-Awsat](#), Feb. 3, 2014.
- <sup>18</sup> "75% of Fallujah Residents Have Abandoned the City, as Aid Gets in Through Unofficial Crossings," [al-Mada](#), Jan. 25, 2014.
- <sup>19</sup> "Sixteen Civilians Killed and Wounded, Including Women and Children in Shelling of Fallujah," [al-Sumaria News](#), Jan. 16, 2014.
- <sup>20</sup> Broadcast on *Baghdad TV*.
- <sup>21</sup> "Nujayfi Proposes Initiative to Solve Crisis in Anbar and Baghdad Belt," [a-Sharq al-Awsat](#), Jan. 30, 2014.
- <sup>22</sup> "75% of Fallujah Residents Have Abandoned the City, as Aid Gets in Through Unofficial Crossings," [al-Mada](#), Jan. 25, 2014.
- <sup>23</sup> "Security Conditions in Anbar Stop Flow of Iraqi Oil to the Kingdom," [al-Rai](#), Feb. 2, 2014.
- <sup>24</sup> Hamdun is now conducting TV interviews with an Irbil backdrop.
- <sup>25</sup> "Basra Announces Development Plans For Next Year At Estimated Value of 15 Trillion Dinars," [al-Sumaria News](#), Dec. 17, 2013.
- <sup>26</sup> "Basra Threatens to Halt Oil Exports if it Does Not Get Five Dollars for Every Barrel," [al-Sumaria](#), Dec. 17, 2013.
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- <sup>27</sup> "Basra Governor's Office Announces Nasrawi's Successful Heart Surgery in Kuwait," [al-Mirbid](#), Jan. 14, 2014; "120 MPs Threaten to Hold Up the Budget, as the South Seethes With Anger Against Maliki Over Petrodollar Cuts," [al-Mada](#), Jan. 20, 2014.
- <sup>28</sup> "Nasrawi Undergoes Heart Surgery in Kuwait," [Buratha News](#), Jan. 15, 2014.
- <sup>29</sup> "Basra Governor Returns From Short Trip For Medical Treatment and Promises That Basra's Rights Cannot Be Given Up," [Basra Governor's Office](#), Jan. 21, 2014.
- <sup>30</sup> "Basra Hosts Broad Conference of Producing Oil Provinces," [al-Mirbad](#), Jan. 25, 2014.
- <sup>31</sup> "Basra's Provincial Council Votes on a Law that Would Require the Federal Government to Allocate Five Dollars for Every Barrel of Oil," [Basra's Provincial Council](#), Jan. 22, 2014.
- <sup>32</sup> "Seven Oil-Producing Provinces Agree on Demanding the Parliament to Return the Budget to the Cabinet," [Shafaq News](#), Jan. 25, 2014.
- <sup>33</sup> "120 MPs Threaten to Hold Up the Budget, as the South Seethes With Anger Against Maliki Over Petrodollar Cuts," [al-Mada](#), Jan. 20, 2014.
- <sup>34</sup> "Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki's Weekly Address," [Prime Minister's Office](#), Jan. 22, 2014.
- <sup>35</sup> "Cabinet Decisions," [Iraqi Cabinet](#), Jan. 28, 2014.
- <sup>36</sup> "Chairman of Basra's Provincial Council Rejects the Petrodollars Conference," [al-Mirbad](#), Jan. 25, 2014.
- <sup>37</sup> "Basra: State of Law Coalition Condemns Governor's Domination of Petrodollar Conference as Media Stunt," [Radio al-Mirbad](#), Jan. 28, 2014.
- <sup>38</sup> "Chairman of Basra's Provincial Council Rejects the Petrodollars Conference," [al-Mirbad](#), Jan. 25, 2014.
- <sup>39</sup> "Oil Producing Provinces Threaten Baghdad: Five Dollars Per Barrel or We Will Stop Production," [al-Aalem](#), Jan. 22, 2014.
- <sup>40</sup> "Conservation of Hydrocarbon Wealth Law of 1985," [Iraqi Local Governance Law Library](#).
- <sup>41</sup> "Basra's Governor Decides to Build Schools on Oil Land," [Shafaq News](#), Nov. 28, 2013.
- <sup>42</sup> "40% Decline in Basra's Agricultural Production to Due to Land Leveling," [al-Mustaqbal News](#), April 11, 2013.
- <sup>43</sup> [al-Fayha TV](#), Oct.31, 2013.
- <sup>44</sup> "Basra: Green Belt is Halted Because of the Oil Ministry's Control of the Land," [al-Basra Newspaper](#), April 8, 2013.
- <sup>45</sup> "Oil Companies Pollute Basra's Atmosphere," [Niqash](#), Oct.3, 2013.
- <sup>46</sup> "Shuayba Region Threatens Sit-in Protests And Demands That it Be Recognized as a Disaster Area Because of Oil Pollution," [Radio al-Mirbad](#), Dec. 30, 2013.
- <sup>47</sup> "Accusations Against Shahrastani and the Oil Ministry of Expelling People and Bulldozing Agricultural Land in Basra," [al-Sharq al-Awsat](#), Nov.1, 2013.
- <sup>48</sup> "Is Oil Pollution in Shatt al-Arab Real," [The Environment Ministry](#), undated.
- <sup>49</sup> "Experts: Water Pollution in Basra Has Crossed the 77% Mark and It Will Take 25 Years to Repair," [al-Mada Press](#), Feb. 11, 2013.
- <sup>50</sup> "Diwaniya Hosts Conference For Central Euphrates Provinces Demanding Their Rights and Inclusion in Petrodollar Initiative," [Radio al-Mirbad](#), Jan. 11, 2014.
- <sup>51</sup> "Diwaniya MPs Say They Will Vote Against Budget Law If It Does Not Guarantee the Rights of Non-Oil Producing Provinces," [Ayn al-Iraq News](#), Jan. 28, 2014.
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- <sup>53</sup> “Diyala Governor Vows to Overturn Decision Against Him,” [al-Zaman](#), Oct. 2, 2013.
- <sup>54</sup> “Mutahidun-Ahrar Coalition in Baghdad Repeated in Diyala,” [Iraq al-Qanun](#), June 18, 2013.
- <sup>55</sup> “Diyala Awaits its Sixth Governor with News on Roadmap within Hours,” [Iraq al-Qanun](#), June 6, 2013.
- <sup>56</sup> “Deputy Diyala Chairman: Five Contractors Dominate Provincial Projects and Humayri has Let Companies Off the Black List,” [al-Sumaria News](#), Dec. 20, 2013.
- <sup>57</sup> “Humayri Announces that the Administrative Court has Accepted His Appeal Against Legal Challenges to His Legitimacy,” [al-Sumaria News](#), Dec. 29, 2013.
- <sup>58</sup> There is a lone report in early December of the Administrative Court ruling against Humayri, but the quote is from a political official, not the court, and if that were true it would certainly have been used against Humayri later, but was not.
- <sup>59</sup> “Head of Diyala Council Regards Humayri as a ‘Fugitive’ and Asks the Kurdistan Region to Hand Him Over,” [Sumaria News](#), Jan. 31, 2014.
- <sup>60</sup> “Re-election of Omar al-Humairi as governor of Diyala in Khanaqin session and naming of two deputies for him,” [al-Mada Press](#), Jan 30, 2014
- <sup>61</sup> “Head of Diyala Council Regards Humayri as a ‘Fugitive’ and Asks the Kurdistan Region to Hand Him Over,” [Sumaria News](#), Jan. 31, 2014.
- <sup>62</sup> “Badr ‘Recovers’ Diyala From the Sadrists, and Ends Months of ‘the Shi’a Quarrel,’” [al-Mada](#), Jan 4, 2014.
- <sup>63</sup> “Diyala Provincial Council Votes to Form New Government,” [al-Gharbiya News](#), Jan. 2, 2014.
- <sup>64</sup> “‘Reelection’ of Humayri as Diyala Governor in Khaniqayn,” [al-Sumaria News](#), Jan. 30, 2014.
- <sup>65</sup> “Diyala Council: Humayri Signed an Agreement Acquiescing to Kurdish Domination of the Disputed Territories,” [al-Sumaria News](#), Feb. 1, 2014.
- <sup>66</sup> See this from the Dawa Party’s website, “Diyala Council: Humayri Signed Secret Document Ensuring Kurdish Domination of Mixed Areas,” [Dawa News](#), Jan. 2, 2014.
- <sup>67</sup> “Khuzai Issues Decree of Appointment to New Diyala Governor,” [al-Gharbiya News](#), Feb. 2, 2014.
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- <sup>69</sup> “Militants Expel Thirty Families From Their Homes North of Baqubah,” [All Iraq News](#), Oct. 1, 2013.
- <sup>70</sup> “ISIS in Diyala Bans ‘Spiky’ Haircuts in Three Neighborhoods of Western Baqubah,” [al-Sumaria News](#), Oct. 11, 2013.
- <sup>71</sup> “Assassination of Mosque Imam and Four Civilians Wounded in Two Bombings in Diyala,” [Shafaq News](#), Dec. 30, 2013.
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- <sup>77</sup> “Maliki Distributes 3,000 Residential Land Deeds to Beneficiaries in the Province of Dhi Qar,” [Prime Minister’s Office](#), Jan. 19, 2014.
- <sup>78</sup> “Maliki Sends Cable of Congratulations to the Interim President of Egypt,” [Prime Minister’s Office](#), Jan. 20, 2014.
- <sup>79</sup> “Cabinet Decisions,” [Iraqi Cabinet](#), Jan. 21, 2014.
- <sup>80</sup> “Maliki Meets with Croatian Defense Minister,” [Prime Minister’s Office](#), Jan. 22, 2014.
- <sup>81</sup> “Iraqi Government Expresses its Solidarity with the Egyptian Government and People against Terrorist Attacks Suffered Today,” [Prime Minister’s Office](#), Jan. 24, 2014.
- <sup>82</sup> “Maliki: Our Goal with Land Distribution is to No Longer Have a Single Citizen without Housing,” [Prime Minister’s Office](#), Jan. 25, 2014.
- <sup>83</sup> “Parliament Votes on Amending the Law on Judicial Organization and Discusses the Expired Biscuit Report,” [Iraqi Parliament](#), Jan. 28, 2014.
- <sup>84</sup> “Cabinet Decisions,” [Iraqi Cabinet](#), Jan. 28, 2014.
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- <sup>86</sup> “Maliki Meets Members of the Iraqi Olympic Team Crowned with the Asian Cup,” [Prime Minister’s Office](#), Jan. 28, 2014.
- <sup>87</sup> “Maliki Chairs a Meeting of the Supreme Council on Population,” [Prime Minister’s Office](#), Jan. 29, 2014.
- <sup>88</sup> “Statement of Media Advisor Ali al-Musawi,” [Prime Minister’s Office](#), Jan. 29, 2014.
- <sup>89</sup> “Parliament Session Delayed Until Saturday After Quorum is Not Met,” [al-Forat News](#), Jan. 30, 2014.
- <sup>90</sup> “The Finance Committee and the Legal Committee Discuss the Unified Retirement Law,” [Iraqi Parliament](#), Feb. 1, 2014.
- <sup>91</sup> “Maliki Hands out Land Deeds to Residents in the Rahama Neighborhood for the Role They Occupy,” [Prime Minister’s Office](#), Jan. 30, 2014.