

Iraq Data Brief



As the deadline for US troops withdrawal looms, Iraqis remain profoundly doubtful that their national security forces can deal with what is perceived by a majority as a worsening security environment. Regional and income splits highlight the extreme difficulties of developing coherent policy, while in the absence of the US, Turkey could emerge as a crucial partner.

US troops - thought by many to be practically necessary but politically impossible

- As President Obama commits to the withdrawal of all US forces from Iraq by 31st Dec 2011 **67%** of Iraqis surveyed have no confidence that the Iraqi security forces can protect the population from terrorist attacks and **75%** have no confidence that they can protect the country's borders from neighbouring countries. **49%** believe that the December date is too soon.
- In July of this year **40%** would have approved Iraqi politicians asking US troops to stay if security did not approve and a further **20%** if it gets worse.

Politics

- Reflecting the deep political difficulties inherent in a decision loaded with the tension between security and sovereignty, **31%** believed that were the Iraqi politicians to ask for US troops to stay the coalition would collapse.
- Meanwhile, **84%** of those who believe the security situation has become worse blame political disagreements among Iraqi politicians.

Security situation-regional, age and income divides perspective but a clear lack of confidence pervades

- 31%** believe the security has become worse since January last year with **51%** believing it will become worse after the US troops withdraw

Cleavages in the country

- Region, age and income demonstrate split opinion on issues of security.
- 43%** of those aged 18-24 believe the security situation has become better since Christmas 2010 compared to **14%** of those aged 35-39.
- Respondents in the South are the most confident with **39%** believing the security situation has got better contrasting sharply with **18%** in the West and the North and Central regions at **22%** and **23%**.
- Those with incomes over \$1066 feel greater insecurity than the lowest income bracket of \$266 or less; **71%** are not confident about the Iraqi forces ability to maintain internal security and **83%** about the capacity to protect Iraq's borders as opposed to **60%** and **68%** for the poorest demographic.

Regional relations- Turkey as a regional role model

National insecurity is high with **80%** believing that it is likely that neighbouring countries will act aggressively after the US withdrawal. Of these **91%** believe that this aggressive action will come from Iran.

By far the most popular regional partner is Turkey with **83%** supporting stronger economic relations, **76%** stronger cultural relations and **55%** stronger military relations (though only **38%** favour this in the North reflecting the large Kurdish population and perhaps the real-politic of close proximity).

The survey was conducted using a sample of 505 online respondents between the 12th and 27th July.

[See the survey details and full results here](#)