

Sub-national Report for Iraqi Kurdistan: Events, Forecasting and Analysis

FINAL REPORT

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Part A: Overview

1. Note

About this Report

This sub-national report has been produced by the Country Indicators for Foreign Policy (CIFP) for use by non-governmental organizations, businesses, academics, Canadian policy-makers, and other parties concerned with the current and future state of sub-national regions. This Events Monitoring Profile is based on a fusion of CIFP Risk Assessment and Events Monitoring methodologies.[1]

About the Author

Liz St. Jean is a research analyst for CIFP. Her area of study is international conflict management, with a focus on humanitarian intervention. Her current research examines the factors involved in decisions regarding the use of force in peace operations. She has studied economics as well as international relations at the University of British Columbia. She spent a year working on an independent research project that involved three months in Northern Uganda, and a month in Rwanda.

About CIFP

CIFP has its origins in a prototype geopolitical database developed by the Canadian Department of National Defence in 1991. The prototype project called GEOPOL covered a wide range of political, economic, social, military, and environmental indicators through the medium of a rating system. In 1997, under the guidance of Andre Ouellette, John Patterson, Tony Kellett and Paul Sutherland, the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade decided to adopt some elements of GEOPOL to meet the needs of policy makers, the academic community and the private sector. The CIFP project as it became known has since then operated under the guidance of principal investigator David Carment of Carleton University and has received funding from DFAIT, IDRC and CIDA. The project represents an on-going effort to identify and assemble statistical information conveying the key features of the political, economic, social and cultural environments of countries around the world.

The cross-national data generated through CIFP was intended to have a variety of applications in government departments, NGOs, and by users in the private sector. The data set provides at-a-glance global overviews, issue-based perspectives and country performance measures. Currently, the data set includes measures of domestic armed conflict, governance and political instability, militarisation, religious and ethnic diversity, demographic stress, economic performance, human development, environmental stress, and international linkages.

The CIFP database currently includes statistical data in the above issue areas, in the form of over one hundred performance indicators for 196 countries, spanning fifteen years (1985 to 2000) for most indicators. These indicators are drawn from a variety of open sources, including the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, and the Minorities at Risk and POLITY IV data sets from the University of Maryland.

[1] For information on the structural risk assessment, see Country Indicators for Foreign Policy (2001) *Risk Assessment Template,* Available: http://www.carleton.ca/cifp/docs/studra1101.pdf.

2. Executive Summary

Profile

- Iraqi Kurdistan is an autonomous region within Iraq that has historically agitated for independence and faced discrimination and violence under Saddam Hussein.
- Iraqi Kurds are divided largely along political lines between the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) who fought a civil war between 1994 and 1998.
- The two parties united in 2003 to join the U.S. led coalition. In 2005 they ran together and won regional elections to form the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). Other parties complain that their unification eliminates any real opposition and some are worried that current cooperation cannot last if it is only for political convenience.
- Iraqi Kurdistan also faces tensions with other political parties and ethnic groups in Iraq writ large, largely due disagreement over Kurdish territory and the future of Kirkuk.
- Final areas of concern are the low economic development and the potential for spillover from the conflict in the rest of Iraq.

Baseline analysis

- Iraqi Kurdistan is a medium-risk region with a score of 6.27.
- The primary sources of instability stem from the region's history of armed conflict, unstable governance structures, as well as problematic international linkages. Iraq's history of violent conflicts, including the civil war between the two main Kurdish political parties, the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) continues to destabilize political structures in Kurdish Iraq.

Event Trends

- Events were monitored between 2 October 2005 and 30 March 2006.
- Events reflect a generally encouraging but unstable environment.
- The trend analysis concluded that Iraqi Kurdistan is experiencing a moderately negative trend due to an increase in the number of destabilizing events.

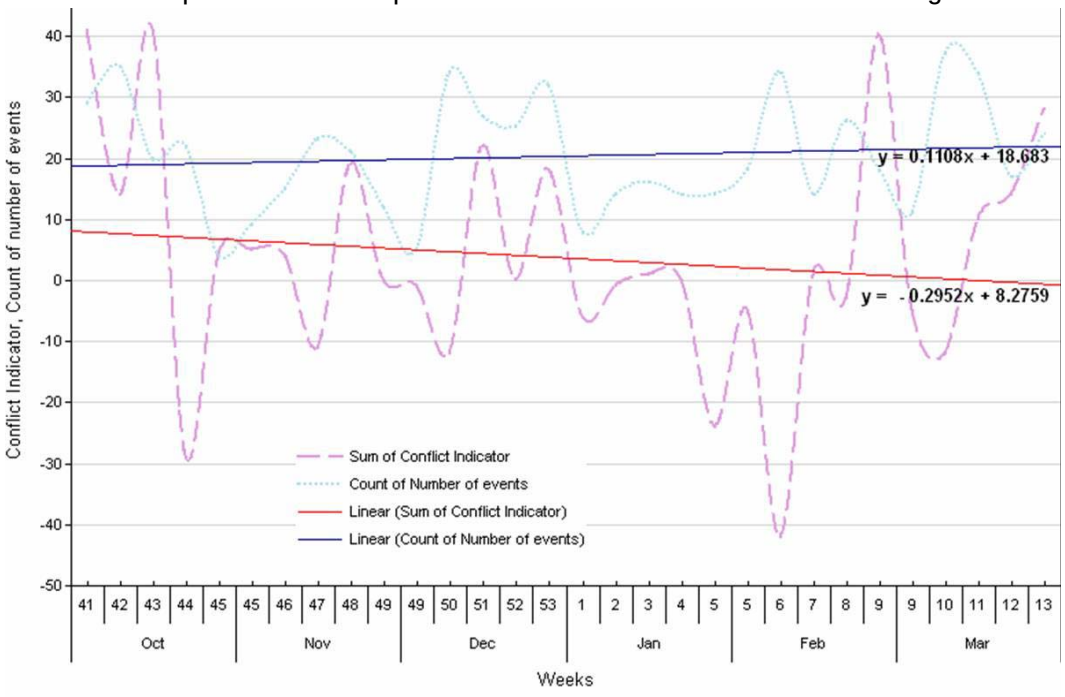


Figure 1. Chart of trend lines for all events and the count of events by week

Primary drivers of event trends

- The trends for Armed Conflict, Governance and Political Stability and Economic Performance events were stable; the average score was highly negative for the first but slightly positive for the second and third.
- International Linkages demonstrated a moderately negative trend due to the fall in number of international meetings.
- Population Heterogeneity showed a slightly negative average score as well as a moderately positive trend. This reflects the general tensions and the ongoing efforts to curb those tensions.
- Environmental Stress contributed to the overall negative trend as the region was severely affected by the bird flu.
- Human Development also had a moderately negative trend, and many of the stabilizing events came in the form of promises, rather than actual funding.

Scenarios

- Most likely case: Violence continues unabated and there rumours of disunity in the KRG persist.
- Best case: The KRG remains unified, and the *Peshmerga* have some success in curbing violence.
- Worst case: Violence escalates as divisions appear between the KDP and PUK; Kurds agitate for independence.

Conclusion

- Iraqi Kurdistan is faring better than the rest of Iraq, but there are areas of concern and two issues that could cause future tension or spoiler events.
- First, the Kurdistan government is not preparing the Kurdish population for the very likely possibility of autonomy rather than independence. Second, the KDP and PUK have promised and portrayed themselves as genuinely unified. Because of this, future expectations of the Kurdish population may far exceed future realities, and this could lead to widespread protest or violence.

3. Event Trends Summary

Overall

General Trend 

- Events were generally positive, but at a low level (+2%).
- While stabilizing events evidenced a status quo trend, destabilizing events demonstrated a moderately negative trend. This trend outweighed stabilizing events, causing an overall moderately negative trendline.
- There was a general increase in the number of destabilizing events, while the number of stabilizing events remained relatively stabled.
- The main contributors to this negative trend were Government and Political Instability, International Linkages, and Environmental Stress. This was caused, respectively, by uncertainties over the future of the current cooperation between KDP and PUK; high level international meetings being relatively scarce during the second half of the period; and the bird flu epidemic, which had human cases, including fatal ones.

Primary Drivers

Primary drivers are those clusters that contain more than twenty-five events. These clusters are the main areas of activity in the region, with the greatest contribution to the overall trend.

Armed Conflict

General Trend 

- Occurrence of a variety of planted bombs, suicides, kidnappings, and a major assassination; some appear random while others are clearly politically motivated
- Government achieves results in terms of arrests and detention of terrorist suspects

Governance and Political Instability

General Trend 

- Constitution referendum and federal elections conducted in a generally peaceful and orderly fashion but followed by complaints of voting irregularities
- Announcement of the formal unification of the KDP and PUK into a regional government, but widespread fear that the unity will not last
- Widespread complaints over poor governance within various municipalities

Economic Performance

General Trend 

- Evidence of improvement in multiple sectors and continuation of foreign and local investment
- Poultry sector severely affected by bird flu; exports banned, general culling
- Problems with price inflation and subsequent increase of cost of living

International Linkages

General Trend 

- Relative frequency of high level meetings between Kurdish officials and those from other states

- Tense relations with Turkey over the existence of the PKK in Kurdish borders as well as Turkey's opposition to the potential inclusion of Kirkuk and an independent Kurdistan

Population Heterogeneity

General Trend 

- Various efforts towards reconciliation between Kurds and other ethnic and political groups
- Tension over Kirkuk's future status and ethnic tensions in Kirkuk and Mosul

Environmental Stress

General Trend 

- Outbreak of bird flu epidemic, including multiple human cases and several deaths
- Government and international community swift to implement policies and programs, including poultry culling

Human Development

General Trend 

- Promises of future spending; some projects initiated
- Severe housing shortages, poor service provisions

Secondary Drivers

Secondary drivers are those clusters with less than twenty-five monitored events. These clusters provide supplementary information to the overall analysis.

Militarization

- Protest over poor pay, but general maintenance of training standards

Demographic Stress

- Continuation of lack of opportunities for youth.

Events are accurate as of March 30, 2006

4. Scenario Forecasting

Most Likely Case Scenario

In the most likely case scenario Iraqi Kurdistan will experience deterioration and its risk score will rise, but it is unlikely to rise to a higher risk category.

Violent political and terrorist attacks continue to occur, though not at the level experienced by the rest of Iraq. Government officials are unable to have much of an impact on the attacks, although they make the attempt. The KDP and PUK seemingly form a unified Kurdish Regional Government (KRG), but rumours persist that the enmity continues and political intimidation and violence occurs between individuals within the parties. While the two parties are technically unified, they are unable to accomplish any major political accomplishments. The economy maintains its hesitant and slow improvement; although new businesses continue to open, there is not a large influx of foreign investment. The regional government is able to maintain relatively positive relations with all of its neighbours but Turkey. However, tensions do not escalate. Efforts at improving relations between Kurds and other ethnic groups take hold and tensions lessen. Living conditions continue to fall, as the housing shortage does not end, and there are problems with the provision of basic services, such as electricity.

Best Case Scenario

In the best case scenario, Iraqi Kurdistan will experience a stable trend and its risk score will not change.

Kurdish *Peshmerga* forces have reasonable success in their struggle to stem violence in the region, and the number of incidences falls. The KDP and PUK remain unified as a force leading the KRG, but are unable to resolve long-standing differences. Although the KRG is unable to resolve the future status of Iraqi Kurdistan, neither does the Kurdish population greatly agitate for independence. The cost of living continues to be a problem for many Kurds, but the economy does not crash. There are some new investments, but economic growth is generally slow. Relations with neighbouring countries remain stable, and although tensions persist with Turkey, they do not escalate into a confrontation. Efforts at improving relations between Kurds and other ethnic groups take hold and tensions lessen. The region is able to sufficiently recover from the bird flu epidemic and does not face another environmental crisis.

Worst Case Scenario

In the worst case scenario, Iraqi Kurdistan will experience moderately negative deterioration, but it will not move into the high-risk category.

Violence escalates, as the number of suicide bombings and other terrorist attacks rise. The *peshmerga* are unable to stem the violence and continue to agitate against their low salaries. It becomes increasingly clear that there is a serious power struggle between the KDP and PUK over control of the KRG. The government is also caught between a Kurdish population that is growing increasingly vocal for independence and other Iraqi parties that are opposed to Kurdish separation, particularly if it includes Kirkuk. The economy maintains its slow trend, but the costs of living continue to increase amidst shortages in housing and other necessities. Regional relations remain stable, but the KRG faces increasing pressure to prevent independence. Its relationship with Turkey grows particularly sour, as Turkish forces continue to launch missions against PKK forces that cross into Kurdish territory.

Part B: Detail

5. Profile

Iraqi Kurdistan – also referred to as the Kurdistan Region (generally), South Kurdistan (by Kurds), and the Kurdish Autonomous Region (by Iraqi Arabs) - is a region encompassing three northern Iraqi governates (Dahouk, Irbil, and As Sulaymaniyah) and chiefly composed of Kurds. Kurds follow the Sunni religion, but they are a largely secular people; today they are differentiated along political, rather than the traditional tribal lines. The estimated population of Kurds in Iraq is 217,220,000 or 20% of the total population. Iraqi Kurds are part of a larger ethnic group that is dispersed throughout portions of Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria and share a long-held desire to form Kurdistan, a Kurdish nation-state. This was nearly achieved in 1920 but was eventually obstructed by Turkish nationalists. Since then, states in the region have consistently opposed any efforts to form Kurdistan. In Iraq, Kurds have attempted to secede on several occasions, each of which was violently suppressed. They further faced decades of discrimination and repression under Saddam Hussein's regime, culminating in chemical attacks in the late 1980s.

In 1988 the Kurds were granted an Autonomous Region, but it was not considered truly autonomous until 1991 when the international community – led by the U.S. – established a no-fly zone to protect Kurds from Hussein's retribution following the U.S.-supported Kurdish uprising at the end of the Gulf War. The region was to be governed by the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), which was first set to convene in 1992. However, a three-decade long rivalry between the two main Kurdish political parties – the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) – prevented any functional government from emerging in 1992. Then in 1994, tensions over revenues and political control erupted into violent conflict between the two parties, and Iraqi Kurdistan plummeted into civil-war. In 1998, a U.S. brokered peace agreement brought about the end of major hostilities, although some incidences occurred afterwards. The peace agreement led to the division of Iraqi Kurdistan into two broad regions; the KDP controlled the North-Western portion, while the PUK controlled the Eastern.

The two parties co-existed uneasily until 2003 when they found common cause by uniting with the U.S.-led coalition in the fight against Hussein. Following Hussein's defeat, the two parties continued to work together in relative accord, and in March 2004, Kurdish Autonomy was recognized by the interim constitution, the Transitional Administrative Law (TAL). On 30 January 2005, Kurdistan held regional elections; KDP and PUK ran together on a joint list (Kurdistan Alliance) and now together form the KRG. This was a controversial move because other parties claimed it eliminated any real opposition, though the KDP and the PUK argued that it was more important to solidify the Kurdish vote before the national Iraqi elections. Another concern is that the current unity exists solely for political convenience and that old tensions will arise between the KDP and PUK.

One main problem for the KRG is the potential for conflict with other Iraqi groups. Although the KRG has worked towards a federated Iraq, there is a source of tension over the territory of Iraqi Kurdistan. The KRG claims that oil-rich Kirkuk is the historical capital of Kurdistan and that it should be incorporated into Iraqi Kurdistan. This has met with resistance not only from federal Sunni and Shiite groups who fear losing oil revenue, but also from the non-Kurdish population living in Kirkuk, particularly the

Turkomens, who oppose living under Kurdish rule. The TAL called for a referendum among city residents, but was unclear as to who would be allowed to vote in the referendum and when it would be held. Tensions were thus expounded when thousands of Kurds who had been living in Iraqi Kurdistan began to migrate to Kirkuk and claimed the right to vote in the referendum. Many of these had been forcibly expelled decades earlier as part of Saddam Hussein's "Arabization" policy to increase Arab ownership of the area. Kurds thus feel they have an inalienable right to move back and re-take what they view as their rightful properties. Turkomens, however, argue the KRG is engaging in "Kurdifization" – essentially a reversal of Hussein's policy.

Another problem facing the KRG is economic development. Although Iraqi Kurdistan did not face the same destruction in the 2003 war, Iraqi Kurdistan is still highly underdeveloped, due to the previous civil war, cronyism and corruption among Kurdish elites and Hussein's repression and discrimination. There had been gains from illegal oil trade, grey market activity and the oil-for-food program during the 1990s, but these were largely confined to a small portion of the population. Still, Iraqi Kurdistan does not face the same violence as the rest of Iraq, even though there are some armed insurgent groups. Moreover, despite corruption, Iraqi Kurdistan was still able to develop a variety of social services, such as hospitals and schools, and promotes various civil liberties in order to attract Western support. Iraqi Kurdistan is therefore situated in an advantageous position for future growth even as it faces a difficult political situation within Iraqi Kurdistan and the broader Iraq.

6. Stakeholders

There are seven key stakeholders that are affected by events in Iraqi Kurdistan. Each stakeholder is composed of a variety of actors that have their own grievances and interests. Of the seven, four are internal stakeholders and three are external.

At the moment, relations are reasonably stable between the majority of stakeholders, although there are some sources of conflict and brewing tensions. The main source of antagonism is the future status of Iraqi Kurdistan. Iraqi political figures and neighbouring states strongly oppose an independent Kurdistan and distrust KRG assurances to the contrary. Iraqi political figures likewise oppose the KRG acquiring further territory within Iraq, but the KRG continues to insist it has a right to areas such as oil-rich Kirkuk. Another potential area of conflict lies between the KRG and both the Kurdish Population and Diaspora. Both of these latter groups evince a strong desire for independence, but the KRG continues to claim that it has given up on independence.

Table 1. Internal Stakeholders

Stakeholder	*Composition*	*Grievances/Interests*

1. Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG)	- Governed by the Kurdistan Alliance, a coalition led by:
	  - KDP: Kurdistan Democratic Party – led by Massoud Barzani (also President of KRG)
	  - PUK: Patriotic Union of Kurdistan – led by Jalal Talabani (also President of Iraq)
	- Also consists of several smaller parties, including Islamic, Communist, Christian and Turkomen groups
		- Striving for further Kurdish autonomy
		- Has laid claim to Kirkuk city, portions of other governates
		- Claim they have no secessionist plans
		- KDP and PUK are two secular political parties with decades-long rivalry; claim willingness to work together to achieve Kurdish autonomy

2. Other Kurdish political parties	- Kurdistan Socialist Democratic Party (KSDP) - Kurdistan Democratic Solution party	- Small-sized parties - Unhappy with Kurdistan Alliance claiming they have unfair advantage
3. Military groups	- *Peshmerga* (Kurdish militia)	- Estimated between 25,000[2] 100,000[3] personnel answerable to KRG
	- Ansar al-Islam	- Radical Kurdish Islamic militant group accused of major human rights abuse, targeting of civilians

[2] Economist Intelligence Unit. (2006) *Country Report Iraq*.
[3] Council on Foreign Relations (2006) *The Role of Kurds in Iraqi Politics*. Available: http://www.cfr.org/publication/9615/role_of_kurds_in_iraqi_politics.html (Accessed 15 May 2006).

	- Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK)	- Turkish Kurd militant group striving to gain an independent Kurdistan in southern Turkey - Listed as a terrorist group - Has targeted civilians in Iraqi Kurdistan
4. Kurdish population	-	- Generally pro-independence
5. Iraqi political figures and other groups	- Federal leadership	- Fear that Kurdish agitation for autonomy will lead to secession - Oppose Kurdish demands for Kirkuk - Oppose Kurdish attempts to control oil in the region
	- Sunni, Shiite groups - Minority groups in Iraqi Kurdistan - Arabs - Turkomens - Chaldo-Assyrians	

Table 2. External Stakeholders

6. Neighbouring states	- Turkey	- Strongly opposes any movement towards an independent Iraqi Kurdistan - Highly upset (particularly with the U.S.) about PKK activities; has launched operations into Iraqi Kurdistan targeting PKK - Cautiously positive relations with KRG, particularly with the KDP - Supports a stable, intact Iraq
	- Iran	- History of good relations with PUK
7. Kurdish Diaspora	- Germany - Other countries	- Pro- independence
8. International community	- U.S. - United Nations	- Support an economically strong, autonomous – but not independent – Iraqi Kurdistan

7. Sub-National Risk Indicators

7.1. Summary

Medium risk	**(6.27)**

According to CIFP risk analysis, Iraqi Kurdistan is a medium risk region with an assessment of 6.27.[4] This analysis is based on an assessment of nine clusters that affect a country's risk for future conflict: History of Armed Conflict, Governance and Political Instability, Militarization, Population Heterogeneity, Economic Performance, International Linkages, Environment, Demographic Stress, and Human Development.[5]

The following sections look at the risk assessment for each cluster, including stabilizing factors, destabilizing factors and potential spoilers for each cluster area. The analysis finds that the main areas of concern for Kosovo are History of Armed Conflict, Governance and Political Instability, Militarization, and International Linkages.

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History of Armed Conflict is a main source of concern, despite the relative lack of violence in Iraqi Kurdistan. The problems largely flow from the consequences of Iraq's previous wars and the ongoing insurgent violence. There are nearly one million internally displaced, and many refugees who fled over the past decades are now strongly agitating for independence. Further, there is violence near to Iraqi Kurdistan's borders and there is at least one large and active Kurdish insurgent group operating within the borders.

Iraqi Kurdistan is also troubled by the Militarization cluster. Although the *Peshmerga* is relatively unified, the KRG is currently resisting outside pressure to dismantle it. Further, their rate of pay has decreased since they have come under federal administration.

In the Governance and Political Instability cluster, there is reason for optimism, due to the ongoing cooperation between the PUK and KDP. However, tensions continue to plague relationships between political parties, and there is concern that the KRG is not sufficiently preparing the Kurdish population to give up their dream of independence.

The last area of concern lies in the International Linkages cluster. This is due to the fact that although there have been general international efforts directed towards Iraqi Kurdistan, the bulk of international attention is focused on the insurgent violence in the rest of Iraq. Further, or as a result, the international community has largely avoided finding a solution to the Iraqi Kurdistan autonomy/independence dilemma.

[4] This is based on a thirteen point scale and by comparing available data to the risk assessment of Iraq as a whole, which is 6.27. For Iraq's risk assessment, see Country Indicators for Foreign Policy (2006) *Conflict Risk Assessment Report*, forthcoming.

[5] For more information about the clusters and their application to risk analysis see Country Indicators for Foreign Policy (2001) *Risk Assessment Template*

7.2. Risk indicators by cluster

7.2.1. History of Armed Conflict

High risk **(8.47)**

Stabilizing Factors
- Relatively free of the insurgent activity that mars the rest of Iraq

Destabilizing Factors
- Many Iranian refugees and nearly one million internally displaced Kurds; UNHCR has been unable to function in the area due to security concerns[6]
- Active Kurdish insurgent group (Ansar al-Islam)
- Ongoing active hostilities across Iraq, often in regions nearby, such as Mosul and Kirkuk, threaten to spillover to Iraqi Kurdistan
- Large refugee flow created Diaspora community that is now agitating for independence[7]

Potential spoilers
- Increased activity of Kurdish insurgents
- Violence spills over from Mosul, Kirkuk or other areas

7.2.2. Governance and Political Instability

High risk **(8.61)**

Stabilizing Factors
- Women possess approximately one in three seats in the northern Governate Councils and in the Kurdistan National Assembly[8]
- Ongoing cooperation between KDP and PUK
  - KDP and PUK agreement over Kurdish approach to KRG, federal politics
  - Talabani given Iraqi presidency, Barzani assigned KRG presidency

Destabilizing Factors
- Tensions between KRG and other Iraqi groups over Iraqi Kurdistan's potential independence
- KDP and PUK leaders are not preparing population to give up dream of independence and accept autonomy[9]
  - Kurdish population has expressed strong calls for independence[10]
- Discord between KDP and PUK beginning to emerge over details of power-sharing
  - PUK does not wish to see Barzani with strong powers in KRG Presidency[11]

Potential spoilers
- Kurdish population proves unwilling to accept anything less than independence
- Worsening of relations between KRG and other Iraqi groups

7.2.3. Militarization

Very high risk **(10.5)**

Stabilizing Factors
- *Peshmerga* is relatively unified

Destabilizing Factors
- KDP and PUK ignored Iraqi and U.S. pressure to dismantle *Peshmerga*[12]

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[6] United Nations High Commission on Refugees (2006) *Country Operations Plan* Available: http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rsd/rsddocview.pdf?tbl=RSDCOI&id=43327a8f2 (Accessed 18 May 2006). Hereafter referred to as UNHCR.

[7] Leezenberg, Michiel. (2005) *Iraqi Kurdistan: contours of a post-civil war society*. Third World Quarterly. 26.4-5: 637.

[8] United Nations Development Fund for Women. (2005) *Gender Profile: Iraq* Available: http://www.womenwarpeace.org/iraq/iraq.htm (Accessed 17 May 2006). Hereafter referred to as UNIFEM.

[9] International Crisis Group (2005) *Iraq: Allaying Turkey's Fears Over Kurdish Ambitions*. Middle East Report N°35 Available: http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=3241&l=1 (Accessed 15 May 2006): 1. Hereafter ICG (2005a).

[10] Gunter, Michael M, and Yavuz, M. Hakan. (2004) *The Continuing Crisis in Iraqi Kurdistan*. Middle East Policy. 7.1: 127.

[11] Economist Online. (2005) *Now Stop Bickering*.

[12] Freedom House (2004) *Freedom in the World: Kurdistan.* Available: http://www.freedomhouse.org/inc/content/pubs/fiw/inc_country_detail.cfm?country=3077&pf (Accessed 17 May 2006).

- Large numbers of armed men and women within *Peshmerga* militias; rate of pay has decreased since coming under federal administration[13]
- *Peshmerga* accused of being American "mercenaries"[14]

Potential spoilers
- *Peshmerga* complain, riot over low pay

7.2.4. Population Heterogeneity

Medium risk	**(6.33)**

Stabilizing Factors
- Largely heterogeneous, but with several minority groups
- Arabs in Kirkuk and other regions have indicated they would be willing to relocate if given incentive packages[15]

Destabilizing Factors
- Ongoing tensions with other Iraqi ethnic, political groups over Kirkuk
- Desire to gain control over less-heterogeneous regions

Potential spoilers
- Inclusion of less-heterogeneous regions, such as Kirkuk

7.2.5. Economic Performance

Low risk	**(1.0)**

Stabilizing Factors
- Presence of oil fields, water resources[16]
- Foreign businesspeople are able to visit, invest in the region
- KRG has been active in attracting international business and economic assistance[17]
- In some ways ahead of the rest of Iraq in terms of economic development; has passed reconstruction and entered development stage[18]

Destabilizing Factors
- Despite economic advances, persistently underdeveloped
  - Previous economic development depended on the oil-for-food program and illegal (sanctions-evading) trade with Turkey, neither of which continue to exist[19]
- Economic problems such as "crony capitalism", high unemployment and high income inequality [20]

Potential spoilers
- Capital flight

7.2.6. International Linkages

High risk	**(6.56)**

Stabilizing Factors
- International efforts, such as USAID, to reconstruct the region and provide humanitarian assistance[21]
- UNHCR plans to begin work in the region to provide IDP/Refugee assistance[22]
- Active U.S. support
- KDP and PUK have had good relations with Turkey and Iran respectively

Destabilizing Factors
- Lessening of international advocacy with the coalition victory over Hussein and the rise of Kurd power within Iraq

[13] Freedom House
[14] Gunter and Yavuz, 122.
[15] Human Rights Watch, (2004) *Claims in Conflict: Reversing Ethnic Cleansing in Northern Iraq* http://hrw.org/reports/2004/iraq0804/ (Accessed 17 May 2006.
[16] United Nations Environmental Program (2005) *Assessment of Environmental "hotspots" in Iraq* Available: http://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/Iraq_ESA.pdf (Accessed 15 May 2006). Hereafter referred to as UNEP.
[17] Economist Intelligence Unit
[18] Leezenberg, 632.
[19] Gunter and Yavuz, 123.
[20] Leezenberg, 634, 638, and 640.
[21] United States Agency for International Development, (2005) *Iraq Reconstruction Weekly Update #2* Available: http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/EGUA-6H6MCC?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=irq (Accessed 18 May 2006).
[22] UNHCR.

- More international attention on subduing the violence in Iraq than on developing Iraqi Kurdistan
- International community has been hesitant to find a solution for the Iraqi Kurdistan autonomy/independence dilemma[23]

Potential spoilers
- Multiple statements are made, making it clear that the international community will not accept an independent Iraqi Kurdistan; this is met with widespread protest by the Kurdish population in Iraqi Kurdistan and abroad

7.2.7. Environmental Stress

Medium risk	**(4.33)**

Stabilizing Factors

Destabilizing Factors
- Low precipitation; vulnerable to drought.[24]

Potential spoilers
- Natural disaster

7.2.8. Demographic Stress

Medium risk	**(6.37)**

Stabilizing Factors

Destabilizing Factors
- Demographic stress: youth bulge and high urbanization[25]

Potential spoilers
- Youth protest, rioting over unemployment

7.2.9. Human Development

Medium risk	**(6.00)**

Stabilizing Factors
- Women have gained the ability to work in traditionally male-dominated professions[26]
- General protection of freedom of expression, religion, and association[27]
- Positive history of promoting education[28]
- Decent infrastructure by regional standards[29]

Destabilizing Factors
- Honour killings and other domestic abuse against women (previously sanctioned by Sharia Law and repealed in 2000)
- Trade, ties with Turkey have increased[30]
- Complaints of human rights abuses towards ethnic and religious minorities[31]

Potential spoilers
- Major problems with service provision

[23] Gunter and Yavuz, 122.
[24] UNEP.
[25] Fund for Peace. (2004) *Iraq as a failed State: a six month progress report - Report #1 Pre-war through September 2003.* Available: http://www.fundforpeace.org/publications/reports/iraq-rep01.php (Accessed 18 May 2006).
[26] UNIFEM.
[27] Freedom House
[28] Gunter and Yavuz, 126.
[29] Leezenberg, 632.
[30] ICG (2005a) 1.
[31] Freedom House

8. Events Data: Trends and Analysis

8.1. Summary

Table 3. Overall statistics

	Total number of events	Average event score	Average score as a percent of total possible (9)
All	612	.18	2%
Stabilizing	329	3.5	39%
Destabilizing	283	-3.7	-41%

Table 4. Overall event trends

	All events	***Stabilizing events***	***Destabilizing events***
Weekly aggregate	Moderately negative 	Status quo 	Moderately negative 

Between 24 October 2005 and 30 March 2006, 612 events were recorded for Iraqi Kurdistan. The overall statistics from this 28 week period show that on average, events tend to be stabilizing, but at a low level (+2%). The period experienced moderately negative trends among destabilizing events, and a status quo trend among stabilizing events. This resulted in a moderately negative trend overall.

The main reason for the moderately negative trend is that the number of destabilizing events increased while stabilizing events did not. So, although on average stabilizing events outweighed destabilizing events, producing an average of +2%, Iraqi Kurdistan is experiencing a downwards trend.

The main contributors to this negative trend were Government and Political Instability, International Linkages, and Environmental Stress. These overshadowed the positive trends produced by Population Heterogeneity and Armed Conflict, and Economic Performance maintained a status quo trend across the board.

Governance and Political Instability was the most active cluster with 167 events. There are a few sources of problems within this cluster. For one, there is uncertainty as to whether the PUK and KDP will be able to sustain their relationship or whether their enmity will break out once again. Another problem is regarding the future status of Iraqi Kurdistan; many Kurds firmly support independence while the authorities are simultaneously promising the rest of Iraq and Iraqi Kurdistan will retain autonomy only. Stabilizing events in the International Linkages cluster substantially outweighed destabilizing events. However, the trend was still moderately negative because the bulk of the stabilizing events occurred in the first half of the period. Finally, Environmental Stress provided further destabilizing events and negative trends. This was due to the bird flu and its escalation in the region. Despite government efforts, destabilizing events – related to the epidemic and otherwise – continued and escalated during this period.

Events are accurate as of March 30, 2006

8.2. Primary Drivers

Primary drivers are those clusters that contain more than twenty-five events. These clusters are the main areas of activity in the region, with the greatest contribution to the overall trend.

8.2.1. Armed Conflict

Table 5. Armed Conflict statistics

	Total number of events	Average score	Average score % of possible 9
All	76	-2.2	-25%
Stabilizing	21	3.4	38%
Destabilizing	55	-4.3	-48%

Table 6. Armed Conflict event trends

	All events	***Stabilizing events***	***Destabilizing events***
Weekly aggregate	Status quo 	Status quo 	Moderately positive 

Although Iraqi Kurdistan does not face the same degree of conflict as the rest of Iraq, neither is it free from insurgency and other violence. The Armed Conflict cluster is marked by a highly negative average score, which is accompanied by an overall status quo trend. This indicates that not only is there ongoing, if low-level, violence, but that it does not appear to be lessening. Such violence was caused by a variety of planted bombs, suicides, kidnappings, and a major assassination. Still, there have been some results in terms of arrests and detention of terrorist suspects.

Overview of Stabilizing Events
- Variety of arrests, detention of terrorist suspects
- Some successful rescuing of kidnappees

Overview of Destabilizing Events
- Isolated terrorist attacks: some attempted, others successful
  - Some appear to be directed towards political parties, typically the KDP or PUK
- Robberies and other such attacks
- Accusations of police brutality and other violence related to the elections
- Kidnappings
- Assassination of the vice-president of the Union of Islamic Religion in Kurdistan
- Violence against Kurds in Kirkuk, Mosul

8.2.2. Governance and Political Instability

Table 7. Governance and Political Instability statistics

	Total number of events	Average score	Average score % of possible 9
All	167	.19	2%
Stabilizing	85	3.6	40%
Destabilizing	82	-3.3	-37%

Table 8. Governance and Political Instability event trends

	All events	***Stabilizing events***	***Destabilizing events***
Weekly aggregate	Status quo 	Status quo 	Moderately negative 

Governance and Political Instability demonstrates stability in its trend line and although stabilizing events slightly outweigh destabilizing ones, there is a general balance between the two. This is caused by the fact that there were often numerous smaller events – stabilizing and destabilizing – related to and occurring before and after major events. For instance, both the constitution referendum in October and the federal election in December were conducted in a generally peaceful and orderly fashion. However, in both there were complaints of voting irregularities and other electoral problems. Another example is the KDP and PUK relationship. Although there were multiple stabilizing events, such as the announcement of formal unification of the KDP and PUK into a regional government, there are still uncertainties among the Kurdish population; many are worried that significant opportunities to heal fundamental differences between the two political parties are being ignored in the attempt to portray a unified Kurdistan.

Overview of Stabilizing Events
- Referendum training workshops carried out
- Numerous meetings between various party officials, informal party members
- Annnouncement that the constitution will be published in Kurdish
- Many campaigns on election awareness
- Majority of public statements on both the referendum (October) and the election (November/December) made in a non-inflammatory manner
- Constitution voting conducted in a peaceful manner, declared a general success
- Saddam Hussein trial begins
- Barzani meets with Kurdish leaders from various parties prior to US visit
- Federal Iraqi elections occur without major violence
- Kurdistan National Assembly announces that PUK and KDP will formally unify to form a unified Kurdistan government; promises that Kurdish government will form by late April
  - Meet with other Kurdish parties to discuss incorporation
- Police have some criminal arrest successes
- KIU joins Kurdistan Alliance list
- Preparations for new legislation to promote foreign investment

Overview of Destabilizing Events
- PUK and KDP unhappy with Iraqi Prime Minister Jaafari
- Non-Kurdistan Alliance parties criticize PUK and KDP over their governance of KRG
  - Some Kurdistan Alliance parties leave the coalition
- News articles suggesting simmering desire to form Kurdistan state
- General complaints of voting irregularities in lead-up and conduct of the referendum for the constitution as well as the federal election
- Barzani threatens independence should Iraq devolve into civil war; threatens chaos should Kirkuk not be included in Iraqi Kurdistan
- Underlying tensions between KDP and PUK, particularly between low-ranking party members
- KDP and PUK unable to merge as planned
- Iraqi Kurdistan Islamic Union begins to take a larger political role, complaining about KDP and PUK
- Creation of federal government delayed; complaint among non-Kurdistan Alliance parties that they are being excluded
- Protests and demonstrations in several cities
- KRG protest nomination of Al-Ja'fari
- Widespread criticism of the poor performance of municipal and regional authorities

8.2.3. Economic Performance

Table 9. Economic Performance statistics

	Total number of events	Average score	Average score % of possible 9
All	71	.8	9%
Stabilizing	42	3.7	42%
Destabilizing	29	-3.4	-38%

Table 10. Economic Performance event trends

	All events	***Stabilizing events***	***Destabilizing events***
Weekly aggregate	Status quo →	Status quo →	Status quo →

On average, events relating to economic performance were slightly positive (+9%), reflecting the uncertain but overall positive economic situation facing Iraqi Kurdistan. This was caused by the fact that the region experienced more stabilizing than destabilizing events during this period. The trendline, however, remains at status quo, suggesting that although the economy is unlikely to either rise or fall in the near future.

Overview of Stabilizing Events
- Agreement between regional and federal authorities over oil exploration
- Reports that there will be an increase in electrical production
- Arrival of previously delayed fuel
- Infrastructure improvements (includes telephones, airport)
  - Flights to Iraqi Kurdistan increase
- Efforts to curb illegal activities
- Price inflation causes increased oil revenue
- New businesses continue to be established in a variety of sectors
- Over 600 graduate from a Korean vocational training centre
- Government provides compensation for the poultry culling that occurred due to the bird flu epidemic

Overview of Destabilizing Events
- Fears over bird flu cause bans on poultry sales, including export to Turkey and negatively impact the market in general
- Delays on fuel deliveries
- General complaints over price inflation for food and other goods

- Multiple occasions where professions (doctors, judges etc) strike over lack of pay
- Because of the bird flu, large scale poultry culling begins and escalates

8.2.4. International Linkages

Table 11. International Linkages statistics

	Total number of events	Average score	Average score % of possible 9
All	133	1.5	13%
Stabilizing	91	3.4	37%
Destabilizing	42	-3.6	-40%

Table 12. International Linkages event trends

	All events	***Stabilizing events***	***Destabilizing events***
Weekly aggregate	Moderately negative 	Moderately negative 	Status quo 

With a score of +13%, the International Linkages cluster demonstrates the strongest positive average event score. This was because with more than double the amount, the number of stabilizing events more than compensated for those destabilizing events that did occur. However, the overall trend was still moderately negative due to the trend among stabilizing events. Over the course of the six months, the number and magnitude of stabilizing events fell. This indicates that although this cluster appears to be performing well on average - mostly due to the large number of high level meetings – the occurrence of such events has fallen substantially.

Overview of Stabilizing Events
- High level meetings between Kurdish and various states, including U.S., UK, France, Sweden, China, South Korea, Germany
- Kurdish participation (officials as well as business persons, intellectuals) in conferences, meetings
- U.S. apologies for incident involving troops firing on Kurdish vehicles, investigates
- Maintenance of positive relations with many regional and international players
- Improved relations with Turkey including reassurances regarding cooperation in dealing with the PKK
- Planned donor meeting in Kurdistan
- Regular flights between Arbil and Turkey; increase in number of flights to Sweden
- Iraqi Kurdistan meets with general international praise over Presidential elections
  - Also praised for response to bird flu outbreak
- Various international donations towards projects to rebuild infrastructure
-

Overview of Destabilizing Events
- Tense relations with Turkey
  - Turkey upset that PKK is in the region; Turkish attack on PKK within Iraqi Kurdistan
  - Turkey opposes Kirkuk's inclusion in Iraq Kurdistan and federation of Kurdistan
- Incidences of U.S. troops firing on Kurdish vehicles, killing Kurds in Mosul, Kirkuk
- Tensions with Syria and Turkey over Euphrates water sharing
- Public statements by a Kurdish Islamic leader opposing U.S. presence in Iraq
- Little or no cooperation between regional and federal offices regarding foreign affairs

8.2.5. Population Heterogeneity

Table 13. Population Heterogeneity statistics

	Total number of events	Average score	Average score % of possible 9
All	45	-.3	-3%
Stabilizing	21	3.1	35%
Destabilizing	24	-3.3	-37%

Table 14. Population Heterogeneity event trends

	All events	***Stabilizing events***	***Destabilizing events***
Weekly aggregate	Moderately positive 	Status quo 	Moderately positive 

Population Heterogeneity was a smaller cluster; of those events that occurred, most were negative, but they also evidenced a moderately positive trend. This positive trend was brought about by an improving trend among destabilizing

events. The main reason behind this trend line was that the number of such events fell during the six month period. That is, it was relatively more common for incidences of ethnic tensions to occur during the first three months than the last.

Overview of Stabilizing Events
- Numerous efforts, including conferences, meetings, cooperative projects and public statements towards reconciliation between Kurds and other ethnic and political groups
- Christmas is celebrated peacefully
- Christians are provided a safe haven

Overview of Destabilizing Events
- Pressure mounts for Kirkuk to be included in Iraqi Kurdistan; numerous newspaper articles on Kirkuk with distinctly anti-Arab sentiments, politicians engaging in inflammatory rhetoric
  - Tension at federal level over Arab, Kurdish relocation to/from Kirkuk
  - Turkomen resistance to Kurdish rule
- Tensions over voting rights in Kirkuk
- Anti-Kurdish sentiments in Mosul; include threats against meat shipments to Kurdistan

8.2.6. Environmental Stress

Table 15. Environmental Stress statistics

	Total number of events	Average score	Average score % of possible 9
All	37	-.5	-5%
Stabilizing	18	3.7	41%
Destabilizing	19	-4.4	-49%

Table 16. Environmental Stress event trends

	All events	***Stabilizing events***	***Destabilizing events***
Weekly aggregate	Moderately negative 	Moderately Positive 	Moderately negative 

Environmental Stress was a cluster characterized by destabilization. First, overall the magnitude of destabilizing events outweighed stabilizing events. So even though events were roughly divided between stabilizing and destabilizing, on average they achieved a negative score of -5%. Further, the moderately positive trend of stabilizing events, caused by an increase in government responses to the bird flu epidemic, could not counter the moderately negative trend among destabilizing events. This trend was due to the escalatory nature of the bird flu epidemic that occurred throughout the six months.

Overview of Stabilizing Events
- Kurdish government, with federal and international assistance, takes direct action to combat bird flu epidemic
  - Strict regulations put in place and observed regarding sale of poultry
  - Poultry farms supervised and government begins culling of poultry in areas affected or at risk
  - Operations room opened and scientific seminar commenced to deal with the epidemic
  - Medical equipment provided by federal agency
  - UN sends a medical team to assist

Overview of Destabilizing Events
- Bird flu epidemic occurred among poultry; several human cases, including two deaths
- Flooding in Arbil, including one death

8.2.7. Human Development

Table 17. Human Development statistics

	Total number of events	Average score	Average score % of possible 9
All	73	.53	6%
Stabilizing	42	3.4	38%
Destabilizing	31	-3.4	-38%

Table 18. Human Development event trends

	All events	***Stabilizing events***	***Destabilizing events***
Weekly aggregate	Moderately negative 	Moderately Negative 	Moderately negative 

On average, Human Development received a positive score of +6%, reflecting the fact that stabilizing events were more common than destabilizing events. However, one problem is that the

majority of stabilizing events came in the form of promises of future projects and funding. This could result in heightened expectations that, if unfulfilled, could produce spoilers in the form of widespread complaints, strikes or demonstrations. Another problem in this cluster is that the trend is moderately negative across the board. Although stabilizing events outnumbered destabilizing events overall, the number of events fell during this period. Plus, events tended to be of higher magnitude towards the beginning of the six months. For destabilizing events, not only did the number of events rise during the period, but their magnitude also increased. The Human Development cluster thus requires close attention in the foreseeable future.

Overview of Stabilizing Events
- Numerous announcements of plans or projects to
  - build an American university
  - provide more funding for essential services
  - open student dormitories, health centres
  - initiate health and education projects
  - fix housing shortage
  - look into school complaints
- Some medical facilities opened
- Increase in funding for poor families, pensioners
- Apartments constructed in Duhok
- Water project initiated
- Some efforts towards gender issues
  - Start of movie production that shows the challenges of women in Iraqi Kurdistan
  - Conference on equity

Overview of Destabilizing Events
- Severe housing shortage
- Students protest over accommodation and lack of other necessities, such as water
- Lack of drugs prevent operations in Kifri hospital
- Several incidences of women setting themselves on fire to avoid repercussions of social activities, such as physical affairs
- Teachers complain (Arbil) and strike (Harir) over low pay
- Dysentery in Soran
- Increase in violence against women

8.3. Secondary Drivers

Secondary drivers are those clusters with less than twenty-five monitored events. These clusters provide supplementary information to the overall analysis.

8.3.1. Militarization

Despite some signs of negative events, such as protest over poor pay, Militarization tends to include positive indicators. One such example is that a military academy successfully graduated one hundred students. Generally, the Kurdish military remains relatively well-trained and well-integrated.

8.3.2. Demographic Stress

Despite some government attempts to provide youth with projects and employment opportunities, this cluster remains a potential source of a future spoiler. This is because at the moment youth are only provided with a limited amount of attention.

Part C: Annex

9. Summary of Data

Table 19. Overall data

Risk indicator	All events		Stabilizing events		Destabilizing events	
	Trend	Avg.	Trend	Avg.	Trend	Avg.
Medium risk **(6.27)**	-.295	.18	.014	3.5	-.30	-3.7

Table 20. Data for primary drivers

Cluster	Risk indicator	All events		Stabilizing events		Destabilizing events	
		Trend	Avg.	Trend	Avg.	Trend	Avg.
Armed Conflict	***High risk*** **(8.47)**	-.01	-2.2	.05	3.4	.33	-4.3
Governance and Political Instability	***High risk*** **(8.61)**	-.002	.19	-.07	3.6	-.12	-3.3
Economic Performance	***Low risk*** **(1.00)**	-.08	.8	.0006	3.7	.07	-3.4
International Linkages	***High risk*** **(6.56)**	-.24	1.5	-.16	3.4	.017	-3.6
Population Heterogeneity	***Medium risk*** **(6.33)**	.32	-3	.09	3.1	.26	-3.3
Environmental Stress	***Medium risk*** **(4.33)**	-.3	-.5	.29	3.7	-.12	-4.4
Human Development	***Medium risk*** **(6.00)**	-.17	.53	-.23	3.4	-.26	-3.4

Table 21. Data for Secondary Drivers

Cluster	Risk indicator
Militarization	***Very High risk*** **(10.5)**
Demographic Stress	***Medium risk*** **(6.37)**

10. Trend Line Charts

10.1. All events

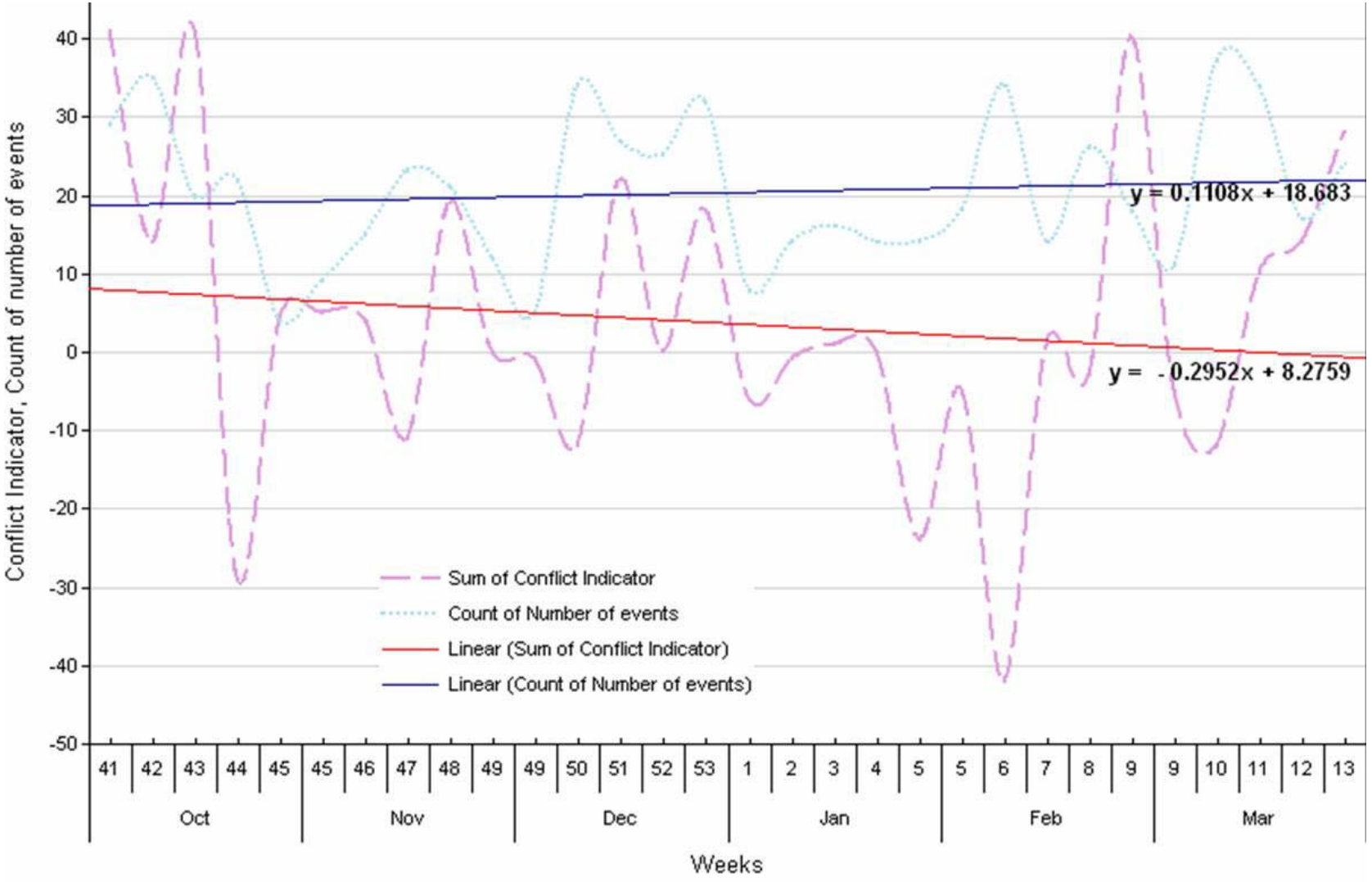


Figure 2. Chart of trend lines for all events and the count of events by week

10.2. Stabilizing events

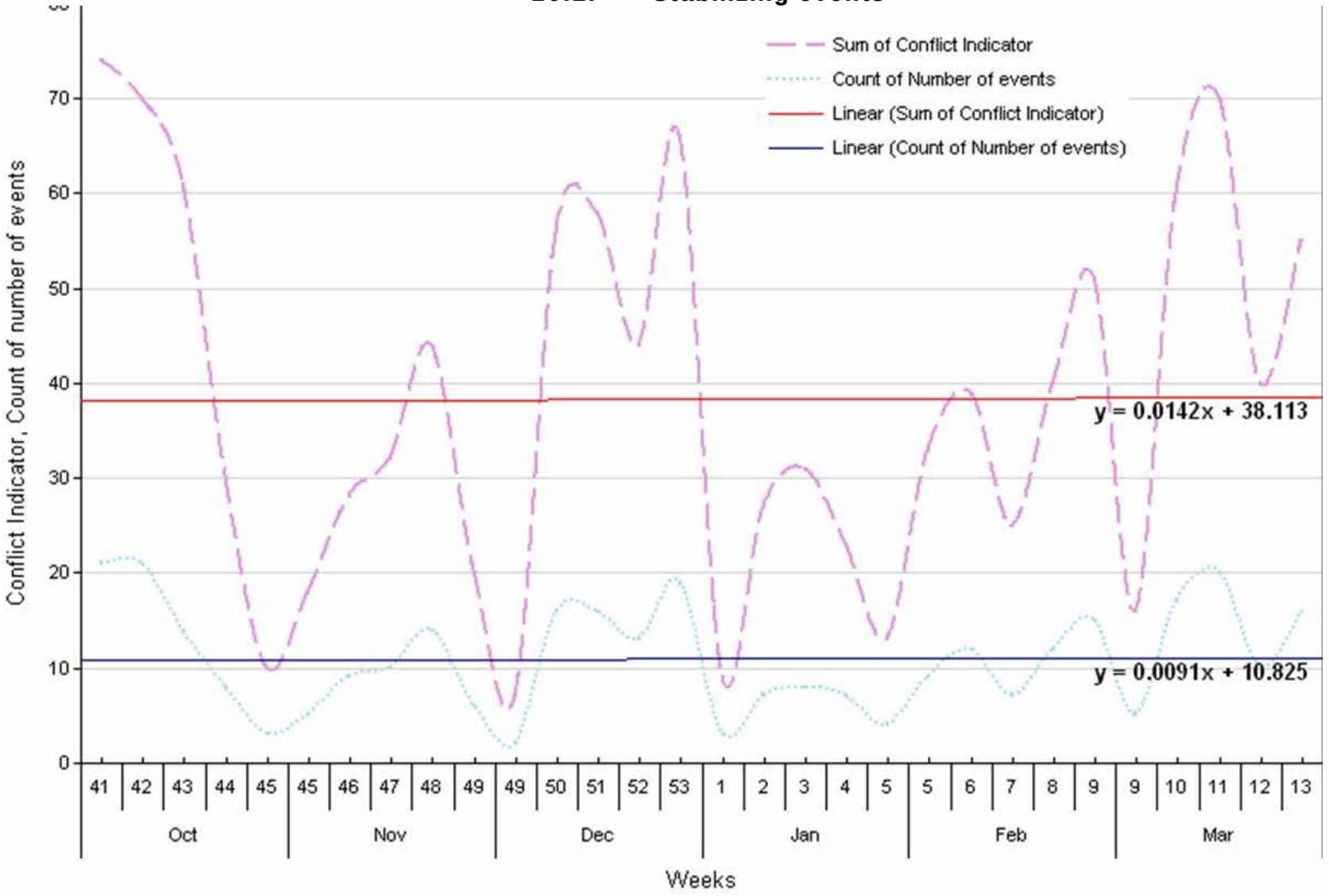


Figure 3. Chart of trend lines for stabilizing events and the count of events by week

10.3. Destabilizing events

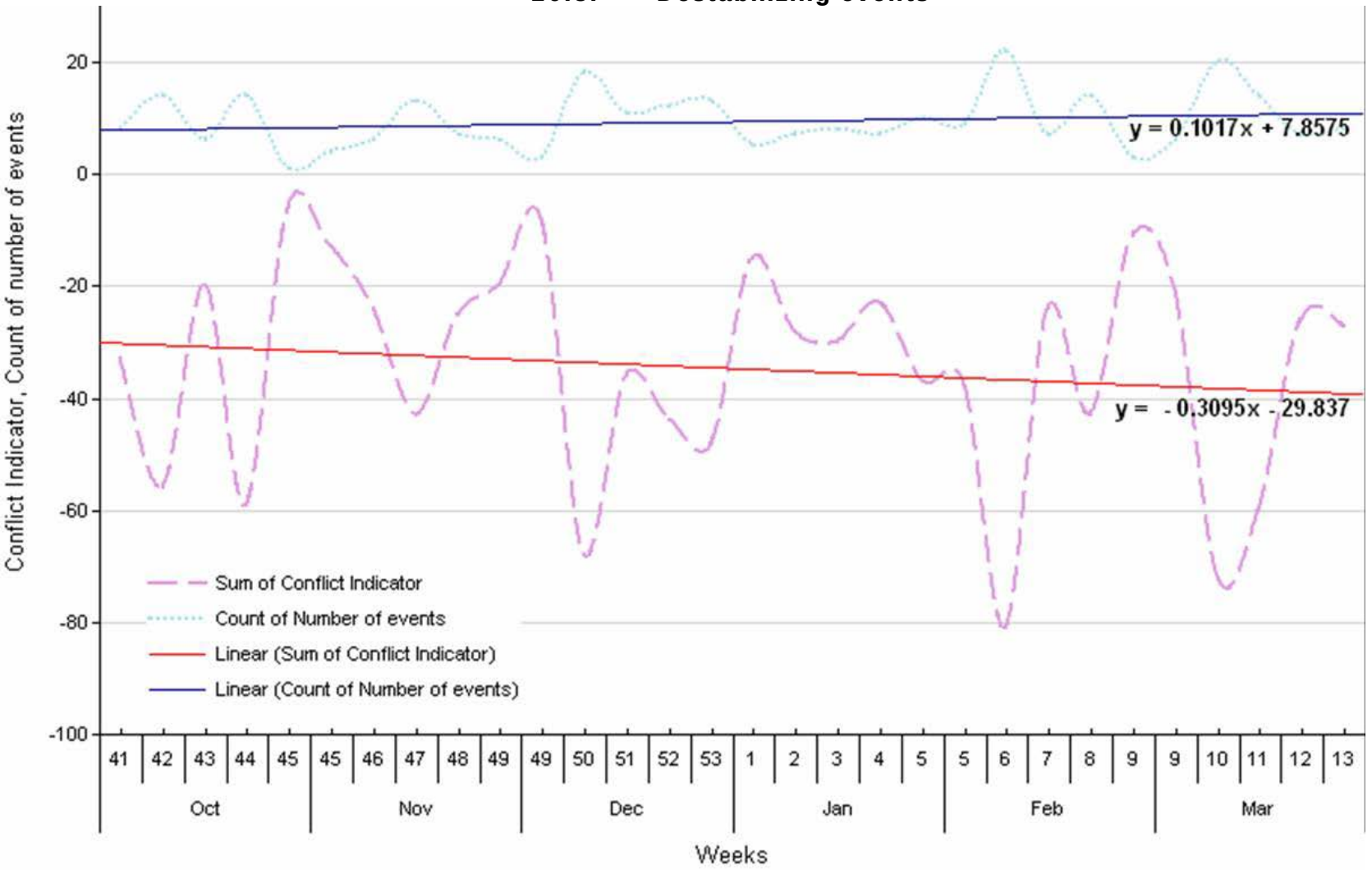


Figure 4. Chart of trend lines for destabilizing events and the count of events by week

11. Maps

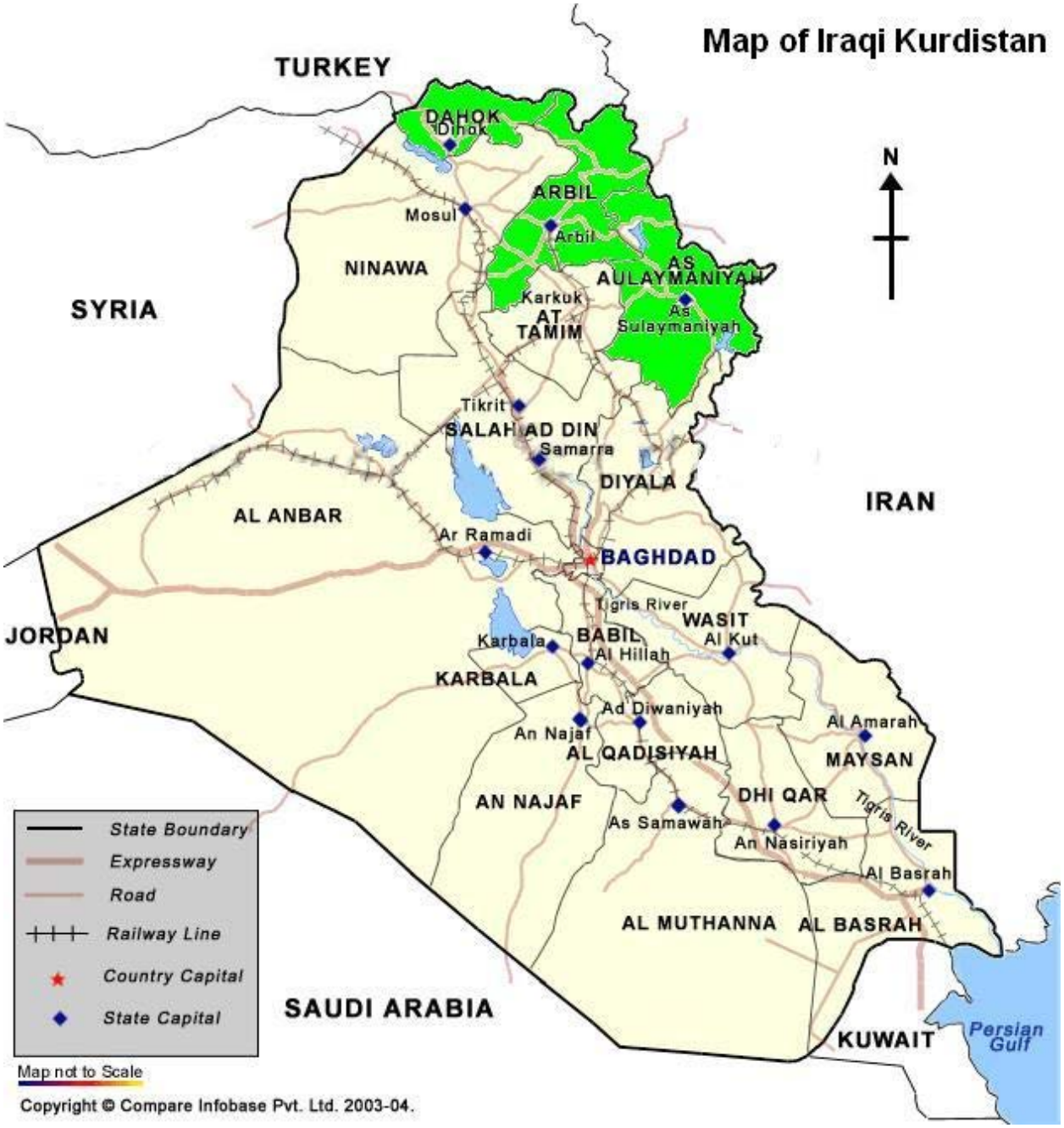


Figure 5. Map of Iraqi Kurdistan adapted from http://www.mapsofworld.com/images/iraq-map.gif

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12.1. Event Sources

Events were obtained using Lexis Nexis by searching for news articles containing the terms "Iraq" and "Kurdistan". The news reports originated from a variety of local and international sources, including:

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- Agence France Presse
- Al-Ittihad (Baghdad daily newspaper) as monitored by BBC
- Al-Ta'akhi(Baghdad daily newspaper) as monitored by BBC
- Aso (Sulaymaniyah weekly newspaper) as monitored by BBC
- Associated Press
- Bahrain News Agency
- BBC Monitoring
- Financial Times
- Govari Gulan (weekly news magazine) as monitored by BBC
- Hawal (Sulaymaniyah bi-weekly newspaper) as monitored by BBC
- Hawlati (Sulaymaniyah weekly newspaper) as monitored by BBC
- Inter Press Service
- Iraqi press highlights compiled by BBC monitoring
- Jamawar (Arbil weekly newspaper) as monitored by BBC
- Khabat (Arbil daily newspaper) as monitored by BBC
- Komal (Al-Sulaymaniyah daily newspaper) as monitored by BBC
- Kurdistani Nuwe (Al-Sulaymaniyah daily newspaper) as monitored by BBC
- Middle East Company News Wire
- Middle East Healthcare News Wire
- Midya (Arbil weekly newspaper) as monitored by BBC
- Qatar News Agency
- Regay Kurdistan (Arbil weekly newspaper) as monitored by BBC
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- Xinhua General News Service
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13. Methodology

13.1. Description of Events Monitoring

Event trends are assessed using the slope of time-series trend lines that are provided by plotting event data over a given period of time. First, based on the context of the region as described by the Background, Stakeholders and Risk Indicators sections, events are identified as being generally stabilizing or destabilizing[32] and given a sign of either +1 (stabilizing) or -1 (destabilizing). Events are then coded on a scale of 1 to 3 for three dimensions: the degree to which they can be linked to the risk of future peace or conflict – Causality (Ca); whether the event is typical or constitutes an acceleration of events – Escalation (Es); and the degree to which the event affects relevant stakeholders– Centrality (Ce). Causality and Escalation are coded based on a qualitative analysis of the event considered within the context of the region's risk indicators. Centrality is coded using a quantitative analysis of the proportion of stakeholders affected by the event.

A conflict indicator statistic is then calculated by summing the three dimensions of an event (Ca+Es+Ce), and multiplying it by the sign to provide a stabilizing indicator of +3 to +9 and a destabilizing indicator of -3 to -9. The analyst can use this conflict indicator to explore summary statistics as well as trend lines of the region's events.

Summary statistics provide the analyst with an overview of the average event scores. The total number of events and the average conflict indicator statistics are calculated, including sub-calculations by sign. For the average scores, a percentage is calculated based on the highest score for that conflict indicator statistic. For instance, an average Ca+Es+Ce can score as high (or low) as +/- 9, so a score of +/- 2 achieves a percentage of +/- 22%. Positive percentages are indicative of an environment that on average experiences stabilizing events, as there are either more stabilizing events or more strongly valued stabilizing events. Negative percentages indicate the opposite, an environment characterized by destabilizing events. The closer the percentage comes to +/- 100% the better (or worse) events tend to be.

The second avenue of analysis is via trend lines to observe whether the events demonstrate any positive or negative trend over time. The conflict indicators are plotted against time – usually six months – and trend lines are generated, based on ordinary least squares regression, and compared in two different ways. The first comparison, the individual event trend line, plots the conflict indicators of each event over time. This is useful in that it indicates whether and to what degree the individual event conflict indicators have a positive or negative trend over time. However, it does not account for an increase or decrease in the total *number* of events, so the second trend analysis is that of the weekly aggregate. To attain this trend line, the conflict indicators are first summed by week; for instance, if one week has four events with the conflict indicators of +2, +2, -2 and -2, the overall weekly aggregate would be 0, the stabilizing weekly aggregate would be +4 and the destabilizing weekly aggregate would be -4. The weekly aggregate is then plotted over time to produce a trend line that incorporates the theory that an increase or decrease in total number of events should matter in addition to their changing value. That is, one would presume that a rapid increase in the number of stabilizing events would

[32] Note that in some unique cases an event will be coded as both stabilizing and destabilizing.

indicate an improving trend, even if the conflict indicators for the individual events remain largely unchanged.

Taken together, these two trend analyses provide an overview of the general event developments over the previous months. In the analysis, both stabilizing and destabilizing trend lines reflect improvements through positive slopes, indicating the reduction in conflict vulnerability. On the other hand, negative slopes denote a deteriorating situation – an increase in conflict vulnerability. The degree of improvement or deterioration is identified as status quo, moderate, or strong, based on the slope and according to the following chart:

Table 22. Matrix of Trend Magnitudes and associated symbols

Trend Magnitude	Strongly Negative	Moderately Negative	Status quo	Moderately Positive	Strongly Positive
Slope size	Below -1	Between -1 and -.1	Between -.1 and .1	Between +.1 and +1	Over +1
Symbol					

Finally, scenarios are created for best case, worst case and status quo situations, based on an analysis of overall and cluster summary statistics and trends. The best and worst cases consider the trends among stabilizing and destabilizing events. The best case assumes that the strongest of the positive trends will hold for the future time period, and the worst case assumes that the strongest of the negative trends will occur. This holds regardless of whether the positive (or negative) trend occurs among destabilizing (or stabilizing) events. For instance, if there is strongly positive trend among destabilizing events, this trend would be used to extrapolate events for the best case scenario. If there is a strongly negative trend among stabilizing events, this trend would be used for the worst case. The status quo, on the other hand, will extrapolate future tendencies based on the overall trend. For instance, if there is moderate overall improvement, then the status quo assumes that this is the trend for the future. Events are then surmised based on these trends in order to provide a conjectured future case.

Each case concludes by estimating the region's future capacity to absorb damaging events and take advantage of peace-building opportunities by forecasting the best, worst or status quo trends. The conclusion will also state the likelihood that the region will approach a higher or lower risk level; this analysis is based on whether the current risk level is already near a lower or higher category and the magnitude of the trend under consideration. For example, a medium-risk region of 3.6 with a strongly positive trend line is likely to move into the low risk level. Alternatively, a medium-risk region of 6.4 with a weak trend line is unlikely to move into the low risk level, but it could move into a high risk level with a moderately deteriorating trend.

13.2. Description of Events Data Collection

Events were collected in one of two methods for this study.

In most cases, the news-parsing technology of Google-Alerts (www.google.com/alerts) was employed to scan and collect daily reports of events data reported by the international press about the particular sub-national region of interest. Search terms were identified by the sub-national region itself and as a result of the stakeholder analysis (if one actor or group tended to garner a significant amount of press but not necessarily reported in the same news stories as the name of the sub-national region); in some cases, alternate spellings and transliterations were used as search terms to ensure a more robust set of data. News reports were then delivered to analysts as daily emails (if news events were found for that day) which were then coded into a Microsoft Access Database using the methodology described above.

The other method by which data was gathered for this study was to collect the data post-facto. Some sub-national regions' data was collected only partially using Google-Alerts so a more robust reassessment of the monitoring time period was required. To do this, analysts employed a LexisNexis search for the monitoring period and using the same search parameters as had been used with Google-Alerts. The events collected using this methodology are identical in type to the daily digest-type – the only difference is the timing in which the analysts coded the events was not continuous.