

# Predicting the Shape of Iraq's Next Sunni Insurgencies

by [Michael Knights \(/experts/michael-knights\)](#)

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



[Michael Knights \(/experts/michael-knights\)](#)

Michael Knights is the Jill and Jay Bernstein Fellow of The Washington Institute, specializing in the military and security affairs of Iraq, Iran, and the Persian Gulf states. He is a co-founder of the Militia Spotlight platform, which offers in-depth analysis of developments related to the Iranian-backed militias in Iraq and Syria.



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## Analysts tracking the insurgent landscape in Iraq can draw many lessons from 2010-14, the period during which the Islamic State recovered its potency.

New insurgent attacks by the Islamic State were springing up in Mosul before the ashes were even cold from the climax of the liberation battle in June 2017. With the Islamic State holding just one square mile of western Mosul, the group marked the start of the Eid religious festival by launching a wave of suicide-vest and car-bomb attacks in liberated east Mosul on June 23-24. As their last inner city defensive pocket was crumbling, Islamic State forces at the edges of the city launched a 40-man raid into the Tanak and Yarmuk districts on the outer western edge of Mosul city on June 26, panicking citizens into leaving the ostensibly liberated area. These incidents, and others like them, underline the manner in which Islamic State fighters have transitioned fairly smoothly and quickly from open occupation of territory back to the terrorism and insurgency tactics that they utilized prior to 2014...

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