

How to Secure Mosul: Lessons from 2008-2014

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In early 2017, Iraqi security forces are likely to liberate Mosul from the Islamic State, which has held the city since June 2014. As the event draws near, big-picture questions regarding how Arabs, Kurds, and microminorities can work together have justifiably drawn much scholarly attention, as have immediate challenges such as accommodating internally displaced persons. Less studied has been the critical issue of how security forces should be structured to prevent an IS recurrence. Here, the recent historical record offers unambiguous lessons through two periods: 2007-2011, when U.S.-backed Iraqi forces substantially reduced security incidents in the city, versus 2011-2014, when such incidents steadily rose, facilitating the IS takeover.

In this Research Note, [Michael Knights \(http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/experts/view/knights-michael\)](http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/experts/view/knights-michael) lays out the prerequisites for stability in Mosul, including preventing Kurdish Peshmerga or Shiite militia involvement in the urban battle, integrating the various security forces working in the city, and ensuring a firm U.S. security-cooperation commitment for at least the next three years.

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