



17 June 2014 – As Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) insurgents pursue their incursion into Iraq, the body count rises in their wake. UN staff on the ground [have reported](#) the execution of hundreds of Iraqis including civilians, hors-combat military personnel and religious leaders following the capture of several population centres.

“Based on corroborated reports from a number of sources, it appears that hundreds of non-combatant men were summarily executed over the past five days, including surrendered or captured soldiers, military conscripts, police and others associated with the Government,” [reports](#)

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay.

“The provocative language used by ISIL, which has been talking about ‘liquidating herds of sheep’ and inciting sectarian tensions is clearly intended to sow further chaos and bloodshed in the country,” Pillay continued, adding that these killings almost certainly amount to war crimes.

On the humanitarian front, [UNAMI](#) reported today that up to half a million people have been displaced by the fighting in Mosul, including 300,000 of whom have fled to Erbil and Dohuk in the Kurdistan region of Iraq. UNAMI said that UN agencies and their partners are providing assistance to the displaced, including food, shelter and water to displaced families in Erbil.

The World Food Programme ([WFP](#)) is warning of food scarcity in shops and markets in areas between Mosul and Kurdistan. The agency reported that it continues to scale-up its emergency response to reach more of the Iraqi displaced. Also, the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)), expressed concern over the spread of measles and polio, since measles is endemic in Mosul and there have already been reports of new polio cases in Iraq this year as a result of the Syria crisis.

Navi Pillay underlined the strength of the Iraqi people and urges unity to establish peace and order, “The people of Iraq have shown remarkable resilience in the face of constant suffering over the past decade. This new wave of fighting and extreme violence is very dangerous, not just to Iraq but to the entire region. I urge all the country’s political and religious leaders to unite in their opposition to these efforts to rip the country apart along sectarian or geographic lines.”

Adding his voice, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon urged that the perpetrators of those crimes be brought to justice, while also calling on Iraqi leaders to prevent sectarian reprisals.