

Summary of humanitarian needs in Hawija

April 2025

PAX and its partners have been conducting research on the direct and reverberating impacts of the Dutch airstrike on Hawija on civilians since 2020 by visiting the city, and gathering testimonies from victims and key informants. This paper summarizes all civilian harm we have been able to record.



A destroyed factory in the Hawija industrial district – PAX/ Jan 2025

From 2021-22, PAX and its partners interviewed 119 civilians directly impacted by the Dutch airstrike in Hawija, carried out 40 Key Informant Interviews (KII), four Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and carried out over four visits to Hawija. The findings from these activities are included in the report [After the Strike](#). PAX has conducted further research and visits to Hawija since then, the last one taking place in January-February 2025. Overall, we have observed and reported the following **direct harm**:

- The airstrike caused at least 85 civilian deaths.
- At least 101 of the 119 victims interviewed sustained damage to personal property as a direct result of the airstrike.
- At least 108 of the 119 victims interviewed had lost their source of livelihoods as a direct result of the airstrike.
- PAX's research concluded that at least 6,000 houses and buildings were damaged by the airstrike. The [coalition's own Battle Damage Assessment](#) from 3 June 2015 noted that 136 buildings were confirmed destroyed and another 544 were damaged.
- In terms of the in the industrial neighborhood itself:
 - 20 car dealerships were destroyed by the airstrike (some workshops have opened since, but none of the dealerships have opened as of Jan 2025).
 - 5 ice factories were destroyed by the airstrike (as of Jan 2025, they remain destroyed).
 - 1 flour mill was destroyed by the airstrike (it has been re-built by its owner privately).
 - 1 textile mill was destroyed by the airstrike (and remains destroyed as of Jan 2025)

- 1 electricity sub-station was destroyed by the airstrike (as a result, [UNDP was requested to provide assistance in providing a mobile sub-station to Hawija in 2022-3](#))
- 3 brick factories were destroyed by the airstrike, and have yet to be re-built as of Jan 2025
- The building/office of the municipality department was destroyed by the airstrike, but it has been rehabilitated
- The building/office of the civil defense department, including 12 of their specialized vehicles were damaged by the airstrike (ambulances, fire fighting vehicles, first response vehicles etc.) were destroyed. While the building has been rehabilitated since, the status of the vehicles is unknown to PAX.
- Tal'ea fuel station was destroyed by the airstrike
- At least 1.200 shops were damaged, some of which have been rehabilitated privately by owners. IOM, using the funding provided by the Dutch government for community rehabilitation projects, reported rehabilitating [259 shops, and constructed 24 shops](#). During a trip to the site in January 2025, PAX observed that shops were indeed rehabilitated but only a handful were actually operational. As shared by the Mayor of Hawija in an interview on 27 January 2025, the groundwork for the shops was not done properly, and there is a lack of adequate drainage system; as a result, there are cracks in the walls of the rehabilitated shops already. In a follow-up interview by the municipality department, the same day, while they got mine clearance and radiation clearance, the rehabilitated shops did not get clearance from an engineering point of view, thereby confirming the issues in the drainage systems and cracks in the walls. The municipality department further stated that while the land where the shops were rehabilitated belongs to the department itself, it seems the department has been compensated, but not the civilians themselves, since equipment and goods destroyed within the shops have not been compensated for.
- The sewage department was destroyed by the airstrike; it has been rehabilitated since, but PAX is unsure who rehabilitated it.
- The Sunni endowment building was destroyed by the airstrike.
- The veterinary services department was destroyed by the airstrike.
- Six schools were completely destroyed and an additional nine were damaged as a result of the airstrike;
- At least 1.900 persons lost their livelihoods as a result of the airstrike.

Indirect/ reverberating harm:

- The [IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix](#) data shows a larger wave of displacement from Hawija, with over 46,000 persons being displaced in June 2015, which largely coincides with the Dutch airstrike.
- Prior to the airstrike, Hawija was an important agricultural hub for Iraq, described as the country's 'bread basket'. Damages to the agricultural sector, as shared in an interview on 20 September 2021, by an employee of the agricultural department include:
 - Agricultural production has decreased by 30 percent
 - Supply of irrigated water has decreased by 25 percent

- 140 out of 520 dunams of the agricultural research center were directly impacted
- One greenhouse and five plastic houses for tunnel farming were completely destroyed
- Before the airstrike, the center used to produce 1.2 million saplings a year for replanting in all of Iraq. After the airstrike and until at least the end of 2021, this number was decreased to 200.000. Production therefore stood at 20 percent compared to pre-airstrike numbers.
- Other negative impacts included the rise in child labor, the decrease in number of teachers (down from 5.040 pre-airstrike to 3.200 in April 2022)
- In another research conducted by PAX during the first quarter of 2024, at least 125 children who were twelve years and below at the time of the airstrike have medical issues, ranging from full body disabilities, loss of an eye, to psycho-social issues.

During its last visit to Hawija in January 2025, PAX noted that not only access to Hawija in terms of the roads and checkpoints had improved, as had the city and the industrial area.



An ice factory, destroyed by the Dutch airstrike – PAX/ Jan 2025

However, upon speaking with key informants from the local administration of the, much of the rehabilitation has been done either privately, and in instances where the rehabilitation has been done by humanitarian organizations, the benefit has reached the government departments as opposed to the civilians. For instance, while the officials of the electricity department PAX spoke to on 27 Jan 2025 were pleased with the assistance they received from UNDP, they were critical of the process, since they were never consulted for any feasibility study. While the electricity

department as a result of the UNDP assistance now has more capacity to distribute electricity than it did before the airstrike, four semi-specialized vehicles (crane, two lifters and two operation and maintenance vehicles) and operation and maintenance tools which were destroyed by the airstrike have not been compensated for.

The civilians and Mayor of Hawija, Mr. Saadoon Al-Jabouri, have three demands:

1. Provide a meaningful explanation and apology to the victims of the airstrike. Visit the area, meet with local authorities and victims in the city. And acknowledge and apologize for the harm done. 'In our culture, if you do something wrong, you have to come back and apologize,' he said. And as such he once more offered to host a Dutch high-level delegation in Hawija for such an event. He also added that after a decade, 'the Dutch government now needs to make some tangible commitments in-line with the needs of the victims before coming to Hawija'.
2. Offer appropriate compensation to all civilians who suffered direct and/or reverberating harm. Individual compensation as well as support for the community still struggling to rebuild the area destroyed by the Netherlands.
3. Offer Hawija compassion and friendship, for example by having a Dutch city become a twin city for Hawija. Imagine how much the expertise of a city like Rotterdam would help a city like Hawija during reconstruction.

ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

This briefing has been produced as a result of a roundtable organized by the Standing Committee on Defence at the Tweede Kamer to discuss the humanitarian condition of Hawija.

For more information about this paper and PAX's research in Hawija, you can reach out to Saba Azeem at azeem@paxforpeace.nl or Erin Bijl at bijl@paxforpeace.nl