

Iraq Situation Report: August 16-17, 2014

1 On August 17, ISIS targeted a strategically important bridge that connected southeast of the Fallujah corridor including Jurf al-Sakhar with the southwest of Baghdad corridor including Yusufiyah with a SVBIED truck. This attack occurred after ISIS published images of its gunmen controlling the area of Karaghul, located northeast of the bridge. The ISF used the bridge to transport supplies.



2 On August 17, an IP force found three unidentified dead bodies of two men and a woman in the Sada area, eastern Sadr City.



3 On August 17, the Peshmerga accompanied by US air support, retook the Bashiqa sub-district in the Hamdaniya District. The Peshmerga reportedly retook the towns of Batnaya, Baquqa, and Tal Saqif which are in Tlikif district, Ninewa Province. These reports remain unconfirmed.



4 On August 16, US Central Command (CENTCOM) conducted airstrikes against ISIS after ISIS reportedly massacred the citizens of Koju village, south of Sinjar. The KDP reported ISIS killed 80 Yazedis for refusing to convert to Islam and took the women and children captives to Tal Afar, west of Mosul.



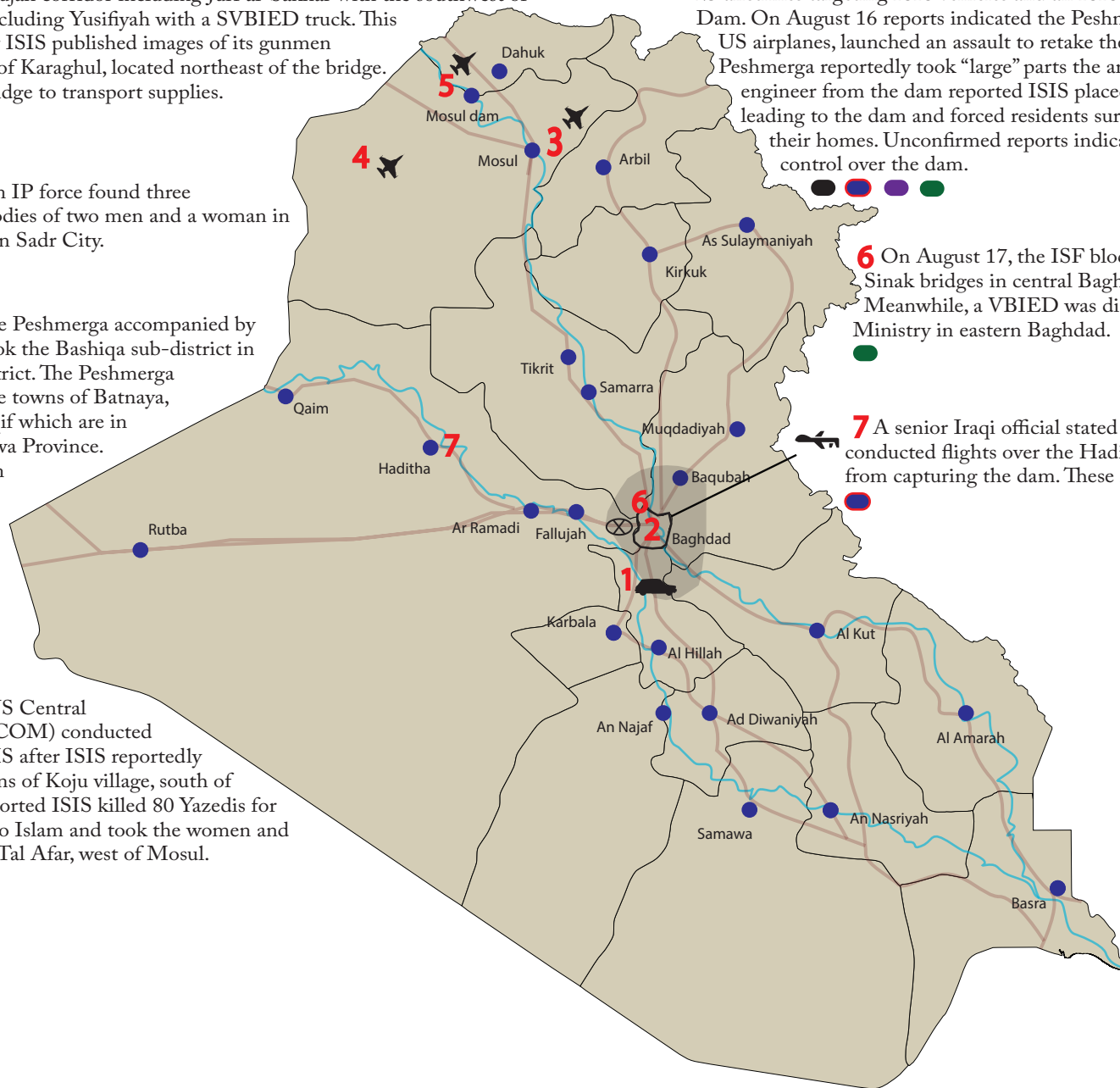
5 On August 16 and 17, US Central Command (CENTCOM) conducted 23 airstrikes targeting ISIS vehicles and an ISIS checkpoint near the Mosul Dam. On August 16 reports indicated the Peshmerga and ISF, supported by US airplanes, launched an assault to retake the dam. On August 17 the Peshmerga reportedly took "large" parts the area near the dam. An engineer from the dam reported ISIS placed IEDs along the routes leading to the dam and forced residents surrounding the dam to flee their homes. Unconfirmed reports indicate the Peshmerga regained control over the dam.



6 On August 17, the ISF blocked the Jumhuriya and Sinak bridges in central Baghdad for security concerns. Meanwhile, a VBIED was dismantled near the Finance Ministry in eastern Baghdad.



7 A senior Iraqi official stated that "U.S. fighter jets" conducted flights over the Haditha Dam to prevent ISIS from capturing the dam. These reports remain unconfirmed.



- Major Cities
- Peshmerga
- SVBIED
- USA
- ⊗ Execution
- Iraqi Shi'a militias
- ✈ Airstrikes
- ISF
- ✈ Armed Drones
- ISIS

100km



Content: ISW Iraq Team and Lauren Squires
Graphics: Nichole Dicharry

The Peshmerga launched a counter offensive in northern Iraq against ISIS. This effort is concentrated around the Mosul Dam and areas east of Mosul that ISIS seized after they seized Sinjar. The counter offensive was in coordination with increased US airstrikes in the area around the Mosul Dam. CENTCOM added protecting "critical infrastructure" to its priorities in Iraq. Other stated priorities include supporting humanitarian efforts and protecting US personnel and facilities. This declaration could justify a wider US role in countering ISIS that extends beyond protecting Arbil and the Yazedi refugees around Sinjar. Meanwhile, the area of northern Babil remains heavily contested as the ISF and Iraqi Shi'a militias continue to fight ISIS there. The attack on the bridge was likely intended to obstruct operations against ISIS and to consolidate ISIS gains in the area of Karaghul, a tribal area that has traditionally supported ISIS's predecessor, al-Qaeda in Iraq. VBIEDs against bridges have been ISIS signature attacks throughout its Soldiers' Harvest campaign, which has been underway since July 2013.