

# Iraq Situation Report: August 27-28, 2014

**1** On August 28, Peshmerga forces supported by U.S. and Iraqi air support launched an offensive that was preceded by artillery shelling to recapture the Zumar sub-district, 18 miles west of the Mosul Dam. Meanwhile the Peshmerga clashed with ISIS heavily on the outskirts of the Ain Zala oil field, located approximately five miles north of Zumar. ISIS militants burned three storage tanks for crude oil in the field after withdrawing. The source noted that Peshmerga fighters cleared several villages on the outskirts of the oil field after heavy clashes. Also, Three U.S. airstrikes targeted ISIS near Arbil and the Mosul Dam, destroying a HUMWVV, a supply truck, three armed vehicles, and an occupied building.

**2** On August 28, IA shelling on Fallujah left 12 individuals killed and 17 others wounded including women and children.

**3** On August 28, a joint force from the IA and IP clashed with ISIS at the entrance of Qaim district, western Anbar killing six ISIS gunmen. The clash is reported to be part of an ISF operation to assault Qaim in the "next days."

**4** On August 28, airstrikes targeted ISIS position in the areas of Khazraj and Abu Jiwari, north of Dhuluiya, killing seven ISIS militants and injuring eight others.

**5** On August 28, 60 gunmen riding in pick-up trucks and wearing military uniforms stormed Hillah Surgical Hospital in central Hillah and took a patient prisoner who has been in the hospital for the past week. The prisoner was held under article 4 of the anti-terrorism law. The ISF reportedly captured six of the perpetrators in addition to three of their vehicles in the Hamza area, south of Hillah.

**6** On August 28, ISIS issued orders to execute 19 to 30 Iraqi Sunni tribal leaders from the Izza, Ubaid, Karabla, Dulaim, and others in Sadia after the leaders refused to pledge allegiance to the leader of ISIS, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. The leaders reportedly fled the area in fear of retaliation while ISIS confiscated their belongings.

**7** On August 28, joint forces of IA and volunteers who most likely include Iraqi Shi'a militias supported by IA Aviation launched an operation on the villages of Safra, Wihda, Mijara, and the Safra intersection, 16 km north of Udhaim. The operation reportedly resulted in the death of 29 ISIS members and aims to advance toward Amerli sub-district. Meanwhile, IA units moved into position near Tuz Khurmatu to break the siege on Amerli.

**8** On August 28, a VBIED or an IED detonated in the Agricultural Road area of eastern Ramadi, killing the dean of the Faculty of Agriculture and wounding four civilians.



There is increased Iraqi Shi'a militia activity in southern Iraq. Since May 2013, Iraqi Shi'a militias have carried out kinetic operations in Baghdad and Diyala provinces to either target Iraqi Sunni civilians or launch possible retaliatory attacks. After Mosul fell to ISIS, Iraqi Shi'a militias were fully integrated into the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). However, the highly visible Iraqi Shi'a militia activity in Hillah signals a significant change in their unconstrained movement. It will be important to watch whether this freedom of movement will result in clashes among Iraqi Shi'a militias. The continued ISF and Iraqi Shi'a militia activity in the vicinity of Amerli will continue to apply pressure to ISIS in the area, although it is likely ISIS will seek to divert ISF resources by launching attacks in nearby areas in Diyala province, specifically the Hamrin Ridge area, in order to divert ISF resources. It is unclear the scope of the ISF operations near Qaim. Still, an ISF offensive in this zone, where ISIS defenses are likely weaker than other fronts, could be intended to divert ISIS away from the middle Euphrates or intended to have cascading effects of mobilizing tribes from Qaim down to the Euphrates, thus breaking the ISIS line.

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