

Iraq Situation Report: August 29-31, 2014

1 Between August 29-31, a combined force of the ISF, Iraqi Shi'a militias, and the Peshmerga, launched an offensive to break ISIS's siege of Amerli in Salah ad-Din province. The combined forces entered Amerli from eastern parts of the area including the villages of Habash and Shokor. The siege is reportedly broken, but clashes are ongoing in the village of Yenkejah and there are governmental efforts to take control of nearby Suleiman Beg district which is under ISIS control. The combined forces were aided by U.S. airstrikes accompanied by airdrops of humanitarian assistance from France, the United Kingdom, and Australia.



2 On August 29, ISIS militants in Yenkejah village shelled the al-Askari neighborhood of Tuz Khurmatu with mortars, killing six civilians and wounding 25 others. Anonymous sources state the shelling targeted the site of an earlier VBIED attack that injured two civilians in Tuz Khurmatu.

3 On August 29, members of the Obaidi tribes reportedly clashed with ISIS elements east of Tikrit.

4 On August 29, forces from the 5th IA Division supported by volunteers reportedly started a siege of ISIS forces in Anjanah, northern Diyala area. According to Khalis's mayor, Uday Al-Khaddran, Anjanah is the last ISIS stronghold in the area and controls an important point on the Baghdad-Kirkuk road near the border between Diyala and Salah ad-Din provinces.



5 On August 29, the mayor of Haditha, Abdul Hakim al-Jughaifi, stated that a force from the 7th IA Division supported by fighters from the al-Jughaifi tribe clashed with ISIS militants in al-Buhayat, southeast of Haditha, killing a "large number" of ISIS militants and destroying 16 ISIS vehicles.



6 On August 31, members of the Counter-Terrorism Services (CTS) Golden Division from Salah ad-Din and Ninewa stationed at the Baiji refinery repelled an ISIS attack on the refinery. According to CTS sources, ISIS attacked from three axes and used a humvee (HMMWV) as an SVBIED in addition to four attackers with SVESTs. The sources also added that ISIS used tanks and armored vehicles in the attack.



7 On August 28, U.S. fighter aircraft conducted five airstrikes against ISIS positions near the Mosul Dam, destroying a humvee (HMMWV), a tank, four armed vehicles, a construction vehicle, and a checkpoint.



8 On August 29, IA Aviation targeted an ISIS Sharia court and two other buildings in Khazraj, north of Dhuluiya, killing 18 ISIS militants.



9 On August 31, anti-ISIS tribal groups have reportedly formed "al-Hamza Brigades" to fight ISIS in all of Anbar. According to the group's spokesperson, Mohammed al-Dulaimi, the Hamza Brigades will target ISIS "starting from Qaim to Fallujah". Meanwhile, an SVBIED targeted a site used as a base by the IA and IP in Ramadi killing at least 37 people including 15 civilians. The SVBIED was reportedly an Iraqi Army humvee (HMMWV.)



- Major Cities
- SVBIED
- VBIED
- Airstrikes
- Major Clash
- Armed Drones
- Anti-ISIS Tribes
- Peshmerga
- ISF
- ISIS
- Anti-ISIS Iraqi Sunni Tribes
- Volunteers
- Iraqi Shi'a militias
- USA

The breaking of Amerli's siege with U.S. air support averted the humanitarian catastrophe that would have likely been caused by ISIS massacring its Iraqi Turkmen Shi'a population. The Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and the Peshmerga have a longer term opportunity to open the vital Kirkuk-Baghdad road, since Amerli sits on that strategic highway as does Anjanah, where other forces are attempting to besiege ISIS. The successful counteroffensive can also allow the ISF to conduct other anti-ISIS campaigns, reallocating forces that focused on the town for several weeks. U.S. and allied air support was required to supplement the efforts of Iraqi elements to relieve the siege, as the counteroffensive otherwise proceeded with difficulty. The Amerli operation also illustrates the ISF's dependency on the Iraqi Shi'a militias to counter ISIS, as a serious reinforcement of militias and volunteers supported the attempted counteroffensive. The ISF risks becoming wholly dependent on militias and volunteers in order to conduct its campaigns, which poses a risk to reforming Iraq's institutions of command and control over the armed forces, which is a priority the Commander of U.S. Central Command, General Lloyd Austin, expressed, during his recent visit to Iraq. The continued cooperation between the ISF and Peshmerga will be a crucial element as both forces attempt to pacify the villages and areas surrounding Amerli. The anti-ISIS tribal actions are indicators of small pockets of resistance to ISIS in Anbar, but it remains to be seen whether these groups can actually gain operational mobility, rather than meet the tactical pressure ISIS has placed on places such as Haditha.



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