

# Iraq Situation Report: November 20-21, 2014

**1** On November 21, a local source from Hawija district, southwestern Kirkuk province reported that ISIS executed two individuals in the central market of Zab sub-district for being “agents and apostates.” The sources also reported that ISIS ordered residents of Zab to remain in the area in order to support ISIS instead of departing to other locations. Also, local sources from Zab reported that ISIS moved a large load of wheat and corn over a basic bridge that connects Zab, southwestern Kirkuk and Zowiya, northern Salah ad-Din. The size of the load resulted in the destruction of the bridge which was designed to be used by smaller vehicles. The sources highlighted the strategic importance of the bridge to ISIS and that ISIS will be forced to use boats for moving across the river. On November 20, an anonymous security source stated that ISIS attacked using IEDs a bridge in Zowiya connecting northern Salah ad-Din to southwestern Kirkuk. It is unclear of the reports above were referencing to the same bridge with different details.



**2** On November 21, unidentified gunmen reportedly kidnapped 13 individuals who were relatives of Council of Representatives’ member Ahmed al-Salmani.



**3** On November 20, ISF and Popular Mobilization Units (PMUs) which include Iraqi Shi'a militias, reportedly broke through a number of ISIS fortifications around Sadia, northeast of Baquba. The attack was coordinated with Peshmerga forces and took place on both east and west axes. Clashes were reported as ongoing and, according to Diyala Police chief Jamil al-Shammari, army engineers found and cleared more than 110 IEDs that weigh 10-30 kilograms each.



**4** On November 21, ISIS launched an attack from three axes on Balad district, southeast of Samarra. ISIS launched mortar rounds as part of the attack. The attack was reported to be ongoing and a causality figure was not reported. On November 20, ISIS launched a similar attack on Balad but it was repelled by ISF and PMUs.



**5** On November 21, ISIS reportedly launched a major attack on Ramadi from multiple axes. ISIS used gunmen and three Humvee SVBIEDs in the attack resulting in fierce clashes with the ISF and tribal forces in the area. The attack reportedly originated from the northern, western, and eastern directions. Tribal leader of the Albu Fahad tribe Rafi al-Fahdawi stated that ISIS members used fake student IDs in order to enter his tribe’s area of responsibility in the Madhiq and Sachariya areas, east of Ramadi. He added that tribal gunmen killed many of the attackers and surrounded others in a mosque. Also, a force from the IP in Habaniya clashed with ISIS in Madhiq area resulting in the death of the Habaniya IP commander and four of his aides. ISIS was reportedly able to infiltrate the city and reach areas near the Government Compound, and Andalus neighborhood in Ramadi proper. This attack reportedly initiated coalition airstrikes in central and eastern Ramadi killing and injuring “dozens” of ISIS fighters. Also, 33 ISIS fighters were killed in the clashes while a total casualty count of the ISF and tribal elements was not reported. Later, Chairman of Anbar Provincial Council, Sabah Karhut stated that ISIS “intends on attacking the city center at night.” He further stated that he called for PM Haidar al-Abadi and the U.S. Ambassador to send reinforcements to the city.



**6** On November 20, An anonymous Babil Operations Command source stated that the Command designated different areas of responsibility for the ISF and PMUs in northern Babil. The IA was tasked with holding the border between Anbar province and northern Babil, the Federal Police was tasked with the second layer of defense, and the PMUs were tasked to work in coordination with the IA engineers to hold the other ground. The source further stated that Babil Operations Command completed the construction of the security barrier between Jurf al-Sakhar and Anbar Province.



**7** On November 20, ISF reportedly cleared Thikhikha village, east of Dulab sub-district, west of Hit district. Also, the security forces cleared the areas of Furat, Shabaniya, and Tal, south of Hit District. An additional security source stated that ISF and PMUs were approaching Hit from four axes in both the east and the west of the district.



**8** On November 21, an anonymous security source stated that coalition airstrikes targeted an ISIS camp in Qayara, south of Mosul killing 20 ISIS members and injuring five others.



**9** On November 21, heavy clashes reportedly took place between ISIS and the IA in the area of Fallujah University, south of Fallujah. IA artillery in the area reportedly targeted southern neighborhoods of Fallujah as clashes went on. The shelling, according to a source from Fallujah hospital, killed one child and injured 14 other individuals.



**10** On November 20, ISIS detonated an SVBIED at a checkpoint on the Albu Faraj Bridge north of Ramadi. The detonation resulted in the deaths of four people and injured 11 others. The bridge was heavily damaged. Fallujah as clashes went on. The shelling, according to a source from Fallujah hospital, killed one child and injured 14 other individuals.



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The provincial capital of Anbar Province, Ramadi, has been heavily contested by ISIS since the beginning of the Anbar operations and has been under the threat of falling to ISIS for nearly a year. However, the ISF and Iraqi Sunni tribal forces opposed to ISIS continue to challenge ISIS in the area and deny it complete freedom of movement. This ISIS attack, although it is one of many, is of significance because it is the first major effort by ISIS to take a major urban center after the counteroffensive by ISF and Iraqi Shi'a militias, to which ISIS responded by launching dispersed counterattacks. Also, this attack highlights that ISIS has a reserve force capable of massing and carrying out major attacks in Anbar province. The other major attack ISIS carried out appears to be in Balad district, southeast of Samarra which also highlights the presence of an ISIS contingent outside of ISIS controlled urban centers and terrain, like Tikrit, Mosul, and areas near Mosul. ISIS launched the attack on Balad likely to disrupt the ISF and militias. If ISIS hardens its presence near Balad, then it would be able to disrupt the supply line running from Camp Taji in northern Baghdad, through Balad airbase, to Samarra.