

Iraq Situation Report: November 27-30, 2014

1 On November 30, ISIS reportedly launched a major attack on Balad using rockets from the Aziz Balad area, northeast of Balad proper. No further details are available at this time. Two days prior, on November 28, ISF and PMUs clashed with ISIS east and west of Balad injuring 11 members of Popular Mobilization Units (PMUs), which include Iraqi Shi'a militias. PMUs and tribal elements launched an operation against the Aziz Balad area on November 29 and reportedly took control of two of its entrances. Also on November 29, ISF and PMUs launched an operation to secure the road extending from Balad north towards Samarra and south towards Dujail. The forces reportedly established checkpoints 4 km off the road to counter ISIS sniper fire which killed 16 members of the PMUs and civilians on the same day. Finally, an SVBIED detonated on November 29 targeting a PMU checkpoint in an unspecified part of the Samarra highway killing two and injuring five other members.

2 On November 29, ISIS reportedly spilled crude oil in the Tigris River, north of Tikrit and set it alight resulting in a "huge" fire.

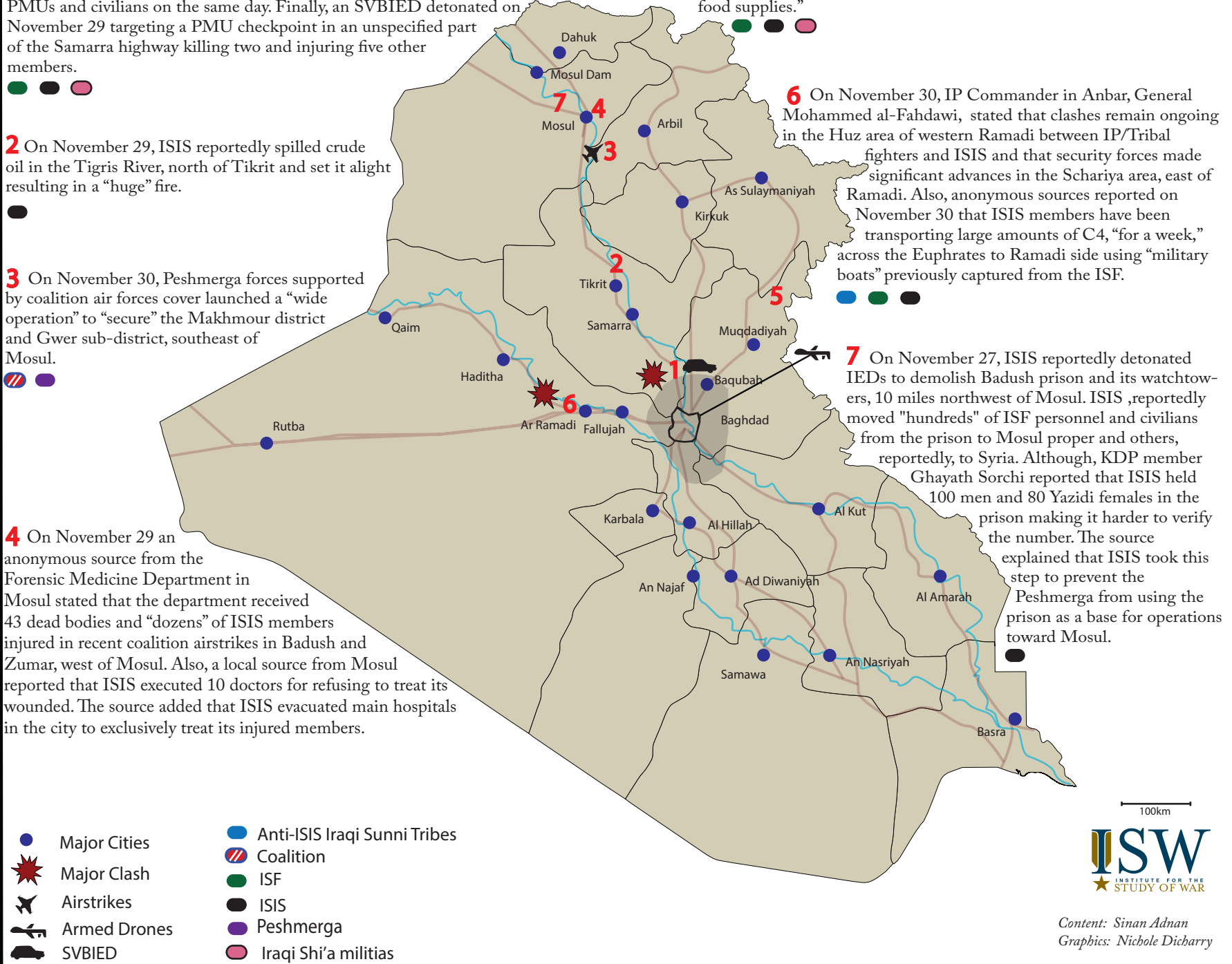
3 On November 30, Peshmerga forces supported by coalition air forces cover launched a "wide operation" to "secure" the Makhmour district and Gwer sub-district, southeast of Mosul.

4 On November 29 an anonymous source from the Forensic Medicine Department in Mosul stated that the department received 43 dead bodies and "dozens" of ISIS members injured in recent coalition airstrikes in Badush and Zumar, west of Mosul. Also, a local source from Mosul reported that ISIS executed 10 doctors for refusing to treat its wounded. The source added that ISIS evacuated main hospitals in the city to exclusively treat its injured members.

5 On November 28, Federal Police Commander General Raed Shakir and Badr Organization leader Hadi al-Ameri stated the a joint force from the Federal Police (FP) and the Badr Organization cleared the Hamrin Ridge of ISIS. Also on November 28, Iraqi Police (IP) Commander in Diyala, Jamil al-Shammari stated that the joint forces seized a "big" ISIS training camp in the Snidij Hills area located on the Salah ad-Din-Diyala border. On November 29, Shammari, stated that ISF and PMUs destroyed ISIS "elite" training camp in the area "destroying 30 vehicles, seizing 10 others in addition to explosives, ammunition, and food supplies."

6 On November 30, IP Commander in Anbar, General Mohammed al-Fahdawi, stated that clashes remain ongoing in the Huz area of western Ramadi between IP/Tribal fighters and ISIS and that security forces made significant advances in the Schariya area, east of Ramadi. Also, anonymous sources reported on November 30 that ISIS members have been transporting large amounts of C4, "for a week," across the Euphrates to Ramadi side using "military boats" previously captured from the ISF.

7 On November 27, ISIS reportedly detonated IEDs to demolish Badush prison and its watchtowers, 10 miles northwest of Mosul. ISIS ,reportedly moved "hundreds" of ISF personnel and civilians from the prison to Mosul proper and others, reportedly, to Syria. Although, KDP member Ghayath Sorchi reported that ISIS held 100 men and 80 Yazidi females in the prison making it harder to verify the number. The source explained that ISIS took this step to prevent the Peshmerga from using the prison as a base for operations toward Mosul.



The Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and Iraqi Shi'a militias are capitalizing on their recent gains in Diyala province. The capture of Sadia and Jalula allowed the joint forces to conduct wider operations in the Hamrin Ridge and Hamrin Lake areas. Both of these areas were previously centers of gravity for ISIS and other anti-government armed groups given their strategic location on the border of Salah ad-Din and Diyala provinces. It is likely that the concentration of anti-government forces shifted from mountainous areas like Hamrin to urban centers that fell out of government control. Near Balad, the ISF and militias are likely to increase their presence near the highway in order to protect a critical supply line that connects Taji, Balad, and Samarra. Meanwhile, ISIS continues to challenge the ISF in and near Ramadi, although the tempo of ISIS initiated engagements decreased in comparison to last week.

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