

Iraq Situation Report: December 19-21, 2014

1 On December 20, Iraqi Kurdish Peshmerga forces, supported by the Syrian Kurdish PYD People's Protection Units (YPG) and Iraqi Yazidi fighters, engaged the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) inside the center of Sinjar in western Ninewa province. By December 21, these combined forces moved inside Sinjar district and retook several neighborhoods inside the city. These operations were supported by airstrikes from the international anti-ISIS coalition.



5 On December 20, ISIS attacked Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) stationed in areas in Haditha in western Anbar. The clashes took place in the areas of Sin al-Thib and al-Sagra. The attack was repelled and French airstrikes supported the ISF. On December, Haditha's mayor, Abdul Hakim al-Jughaifi, called for coalition airstrikes to target ISIS in the Khasfa area which he indicated as a staging area for the next ISIS attack into Haditha.



2 On December 20, the governor of Salah ad-Din stated that ISIS has launched a major attack inside Baiji district in Salah ad-Din province. This statement comes as the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) engaged ISIS in the middle of central Baiji; Iraqi military reinforcements are reported to have arrived in the city.



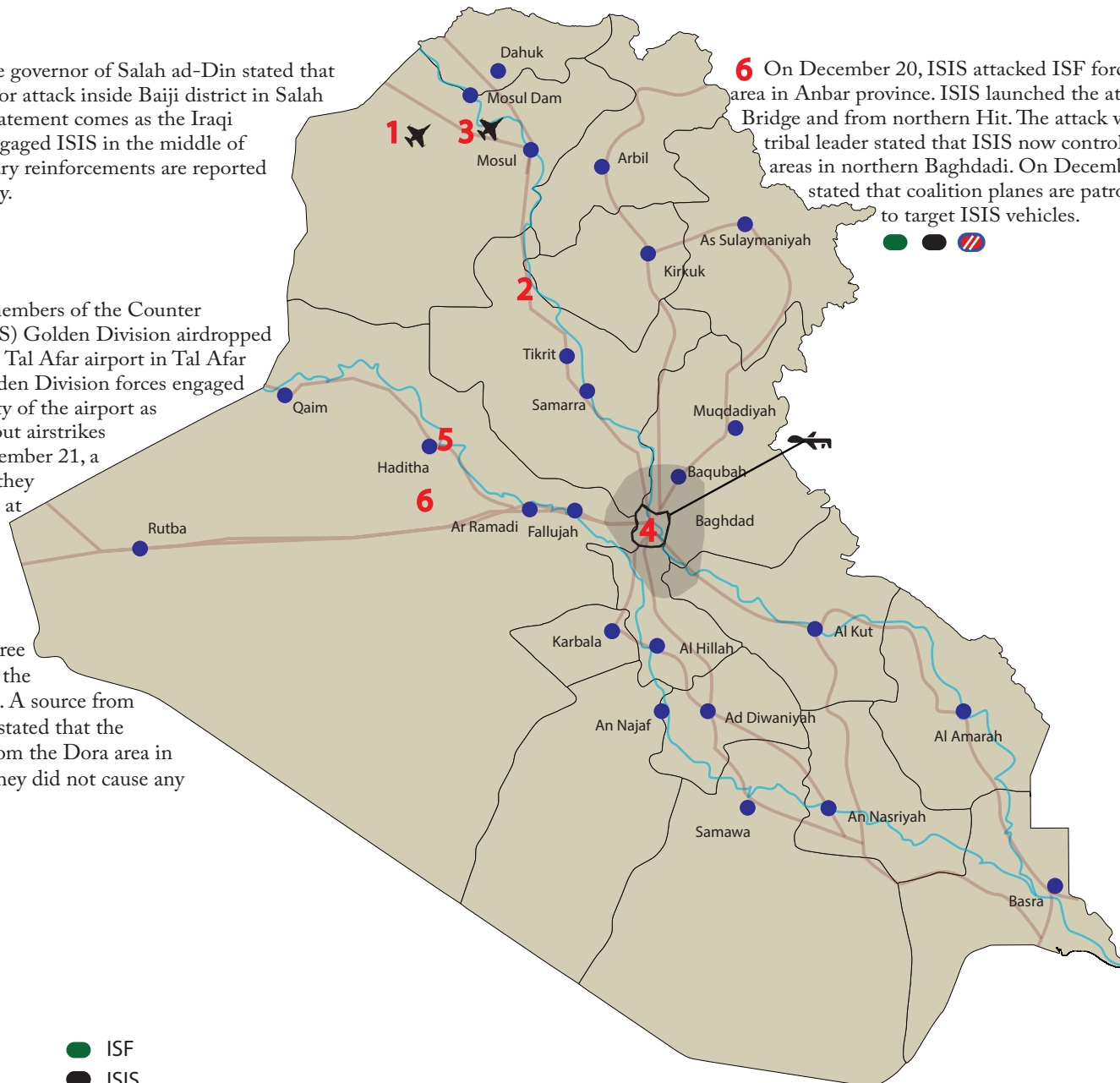
6 On December 20, ISIS attacked ISF forces near the Baghdad area in Anbar province. ISIS launched the attacks from the Joba Bridge and from northern Hit. The attack was repelled, but a tribal leader stated that ISIS now controls the Joba and Sayad areas in northern Baghdad. On December 21, a local official stated that coalition planes are patrolling the area in order to target ISIS vehicles.



3 On December 20, members of the Counter Terrorism Services' (CTS) Golden Division airdropped into the ISIS-controlled Tal Afar airport in Tal Afar in western Ninewa. Golden Division forces engaged ISIS forces in the vicinity of the airport as coalition forces carried out airstrikes inside Tal Afar. On December 21, a CTS source stated that they continue to engage ISIS at the airport in order to clear it.



4 On December 20, three mortar rounds landed in the Green Zone in Baghdad. A source from the Ministry of Interior stated that the rounds were launched from the Dora area in southern Baghdad and they did not cause any casualties.



- Major Cities
- Major Clash
- Airstrikes
- Armed Drones
- ISF
- ISIS
- Yazidi Gunmen
- France
- Unknown
- YPG
- Peshmerga
- Coalition

The Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) is being pressured in northern Iraq's Ninewa province. The Iraqi Kurdish Peshmerga along with Iraqi Yazidi fighters and Syrian Kurdish YPG fighters have engaged ISIS in the center of Sinjar district which is located on the Iraqi-Syrian border. If ISIS is cleared from Sinjar, it will be deprived of a significant border supply line to its bases in Syria. The regaining of Sinjar will also likely mean further consolidation of ISIS in Mosul as ISIS forces will likely reposition to the city. In parallel with the Peshmerga operations, Iraq's Special Forces within the Counter-Terrorism's Golden Division are also reported to have made inroads into the strategic Tal Afar airport in the Tal Afar area of western Ninewa. The airport is west of Tal Afar's city center and was the last location evacuated by the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) in June of this year when ISIS initiated its northern campaign. Golden Division forces continue to engage ISIS in the vicinity of the airport and full control of the airport will increase pressure on ISIS in Tal Afar. The airport can also be used as a staging ground for Iraqi Air Force and ground assets for future operations to retake Mosul. Baghdad's Green Zone was also targeted, likely by ISIS. Although the targeting was on a limited scale, it indicates that ISIS sleeper cells, likely small, enjoy freedom of movement in the areas around Baghdad and retain the ability and intent to destabilize Baghdad by targeting the seat of the government.