

# Iraq Situation Report: December 27-28, 2014

**1** On December 27, a media official for the KDP stated that Peshmerga forces thwarted an attempt by ISIS to send a large VBIED into Sinjar district coming from the direction of Tal Afar, west of Mosul. On December 28, another KDP media official stated that Peshmerga forces and fighters from the Sinjar Protection Force (SPF) took control of the Saraye and Souq areas in Sinjar district following heavy clashes with ISIS. On December 28, Yazidi leader Dawod Jundi condemned the deaths of civilians in a village near Sinjar called Abu Hanaya, and denied reports that Yazidi fighters killed 12 civilians and injured 15 others in an attack on the village under the pretense of fighting ISIS. Jundi attributed the act to "hostile sides" aiming to create sedition.

**2** On December 27, an anonymous security source stated that coalition airstrikes targeted ISIS headquarters in an ice factory, a fertilizer storage area, and in Hawija Mill, southwest of Kirkuk City, killing 86 ISIS members.

**3** On December 27, a "special force" from the Federal Police (FP) Command and forces from the Popular Mobilization Units (PMUs) which include Iraqi Shi'a militias reportedly took control of Dhuluiya military airport located north of Dhuluiya.

**4** On December 27, unidentified gunmen using silenced pistols killed Iraqi Kurdish speaker and Imam of Hussein al-Mula Wahab Mosque in Tuz Khurmatu, Sheikh Salah Jamal Jalal. The attack took place as the Sheikh was on his way home in Jumhuri neighborhood, central Tuz Khurmatu. Following the attack, The mayor of the district announced a curfew to "prevent escalations." A report also indicated that "residents" set a vehicle that was reported to belong to the PMUs ablaze in central Tuz Khurmatu in protest. The mayor also announced that Kirkuk-Baghdad highway was reopened following its closure for several hours. On December 28, unidentified gunmen wearing military uniforms and riding a 4x4 vehicle kidnapped five individuals from Askari neighborhood in central Tuz Khurmatu. A "sound bomb" detonated in front of a home occupied by a refugee family from the Hliwat area, west of the district. Finally, the mayor of Tuz Khurmatu stated that he held three meetings with officials in the district to contain the situation. He noted that the demonstrators demanded the departure of the militias from Tuz Khurmatu, a demand he described as "difficult."

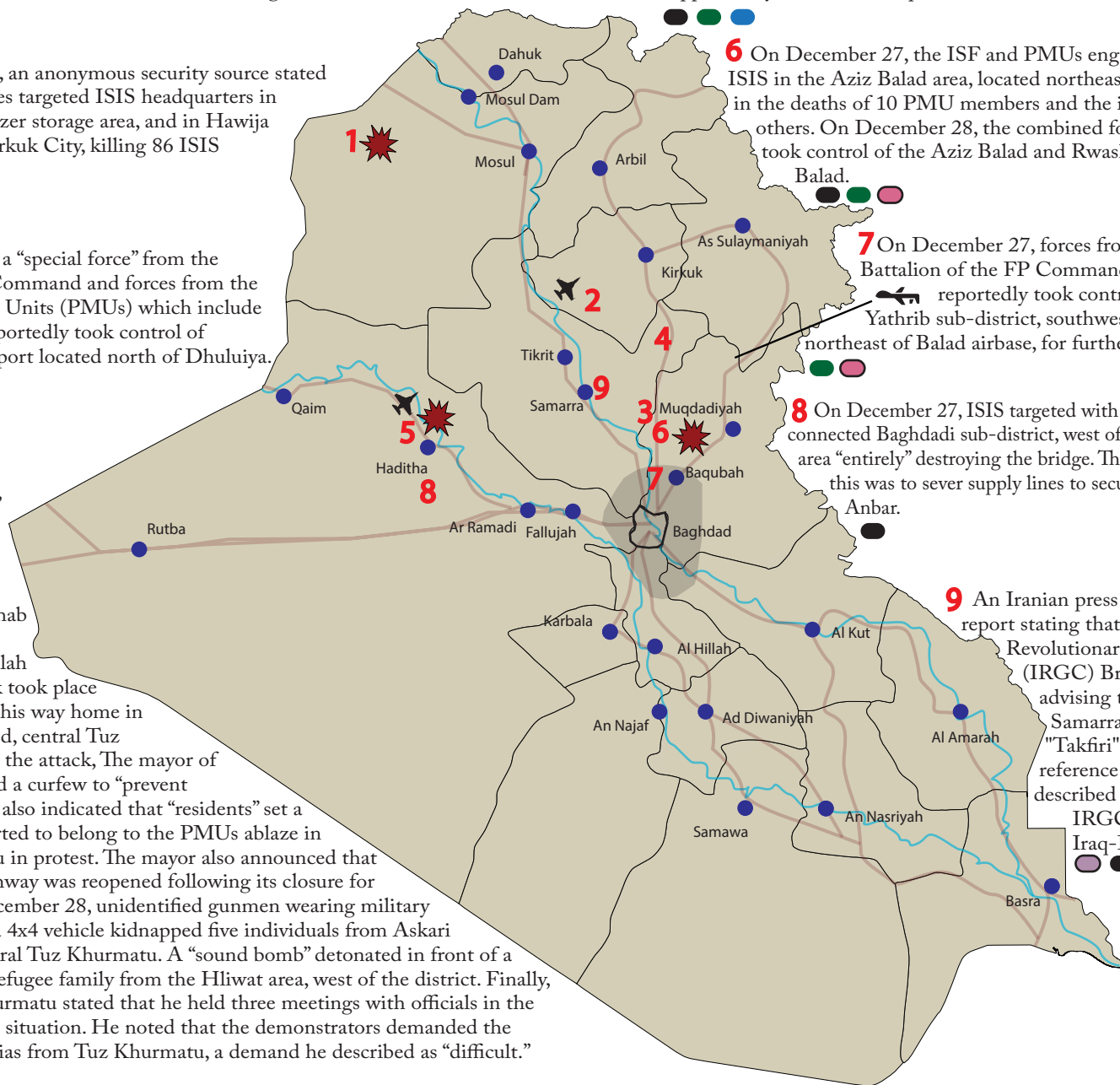
**5** On December 28, ISIS launched an attack on Haditha district originating from Khasfa Village, northwest of Haditha. The attack was carried out by gunmen and initiated clashes at a defensive berm in western Haditha. The clashes killed 17 ISIS fighters and destroyed an unspecified number of vehicles. ISIS also launched mortars and Katyusha rockets on Haditha injuring unspecified number of civilians and causing damage to the Istiklal School. Security forces in Haditha imposed a curfew on the district. A follow up report indicated that security forces supported by IA Aviation repelled the attack.

**6** On December 27, the ISF and PMUs engaged in clashes with ISIS in the Aziz Balad area, located northeast of Balad resulting in the deaths of 10 PMU members and the injury of nine others. On December 28, the combined forces reportedly took control of the Aziz Balad and Rwashid areas, north of Balad.

**7** On December 27, forces from the Commando Battalion of the FP Command along with PMUs reportedly took control and "closed off" Yathrib sub-district, southwest of Balad and northeast of Balad airbase, for further clearing.

**8** On December 27, ISIS targeted with IEDs a bridge that connected Baghdadi sub-district, west of Hit, and the Shamiya area "entirely" destroying the bridge. The source added that this was to sever supply lines to security forces in western Anbar.

**9** An Iranian press agency published a report stating that an Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Brigadier General advising the ISF and PMUs in Samarra was killed by "Takfiri" terrorists, likely a reference to ISIS. The report described the advisor as an IRGC veteran from the Iraq-Iran war.



- Major Cities
- ★ Major Clash
- ✈ Airstrikes
- 🚁 Armed Drones
- Anti-ISIS Iraqi Sunni Tribes
- Iraqi Shi'a militias
- ISF
- ISIS
- Iran
- Unknown Gunmen
- ▨ Coalition
- Peshmerga



Content: Sinan Adnan  
Graphics: Brian Fisher

Iraqi Security forces and Iraqi Shi'a militias undertook a major operation in southern Salah ad-Din province. The operation is led by leader of the Iranian-backed Badr Organization Hadi al-Ameri. The push aims to clear ISIS from areas where it has enjoyed freedom of movement near important terrain since the fall of Mosul in June. The success of this operation would significantly reduce the ISIS threat against Balad airbase which most likely houses a significant number of ISF and militia members. It would also significantly improve security in Balad district and Dhuluiyah; both have been consistently targeted by ISIS. Although the identity of the perpetrators of the murder of an Imam in Tuz Khurmatu remains unconfirmed, the death of the Imam is being perceived by Iraqi Sunnis as the work of Iraqi Shi'a militias operating in the area. The attack has therefore increased sectarian and possibly ethnic tension in an important mixed area. The reported death of a high-ranking Iranian advisor highlights the Iranian role in advising the ISF and militias which is focused on but not limited to protecting Shi'a shrines in Iraq. If the statement was official, as described by the agency, then this also shows that Iran is gradually taking a more public stance regarding its involvement in Iraq.