

Iraq Situation Report: December 30-31, 2014

1 On December 31, Peshmerga forces, local Iraqi Police, and Iraqi Sunni tribal fighters from the Jubur, Lihib, and Sabawi tribes launched an attack on ISIS in the villages of Tal al-Sheir and Sultan Abdullah located near Qayara sub-district. The attack was launched from the east toward Makhmur prompting ISIS to detonate a tanker VBIED in a failed attempt to destroy the bridge across the river between the two areas. One report indicated that the combined forces reportedly cleared the villages while another report indicated that the forces made gains in the eastern side of Qayara and that ISIS “withdrew” to the western part of the area. This comes after reports indicated that Peshmerga forces supported by coalition air cover launched a “wide attack” on ISIS positions in Gwer, southeast of Mosul.



2 On December 31, two mortar rounds landed near the Askari Shrine in Samarra injuring at least five individuals.



3 On December 31, an anonymous security source stated that more than 2,000 “fighters” as well as an infantry and a mechanized brigade arrived at Al-Asad Airbase.



4 On December 30, mayor of Haditha Abdul-Hakim al-Jughaiifi stated that security forces cleared Alus village, south of Haditha. He added that the forces continue to clash with ISIS in the Albu Hayat area, 20 km east of Haditha.



5 On December 30, Security forces attacked ISIS in Albu Khatib in the al-Sajaria area, east of Ramadi. The fighting killed 17 ISIS fighters in the area. MoD stated later that a force from the 10th Division repelled an attack by ISIS in the area. Additionally, anonymous sources stated that an IP force secured 35 km of the Ramadi-Nukhaib road. On December 31, member of Anbar Provincial Council Arkan Khalaf stated that fighters from the Albu Ghanim tribe repelled an attack by ISIS on the Albu Ghanim area, east of Ramadi.



6 On December 30, ISIS attacked Peshmerga forces in Sinjar, west of Mosul. The attack was repelled by Peshmerga forces and resulted in the deaths of five ISIS fighters.



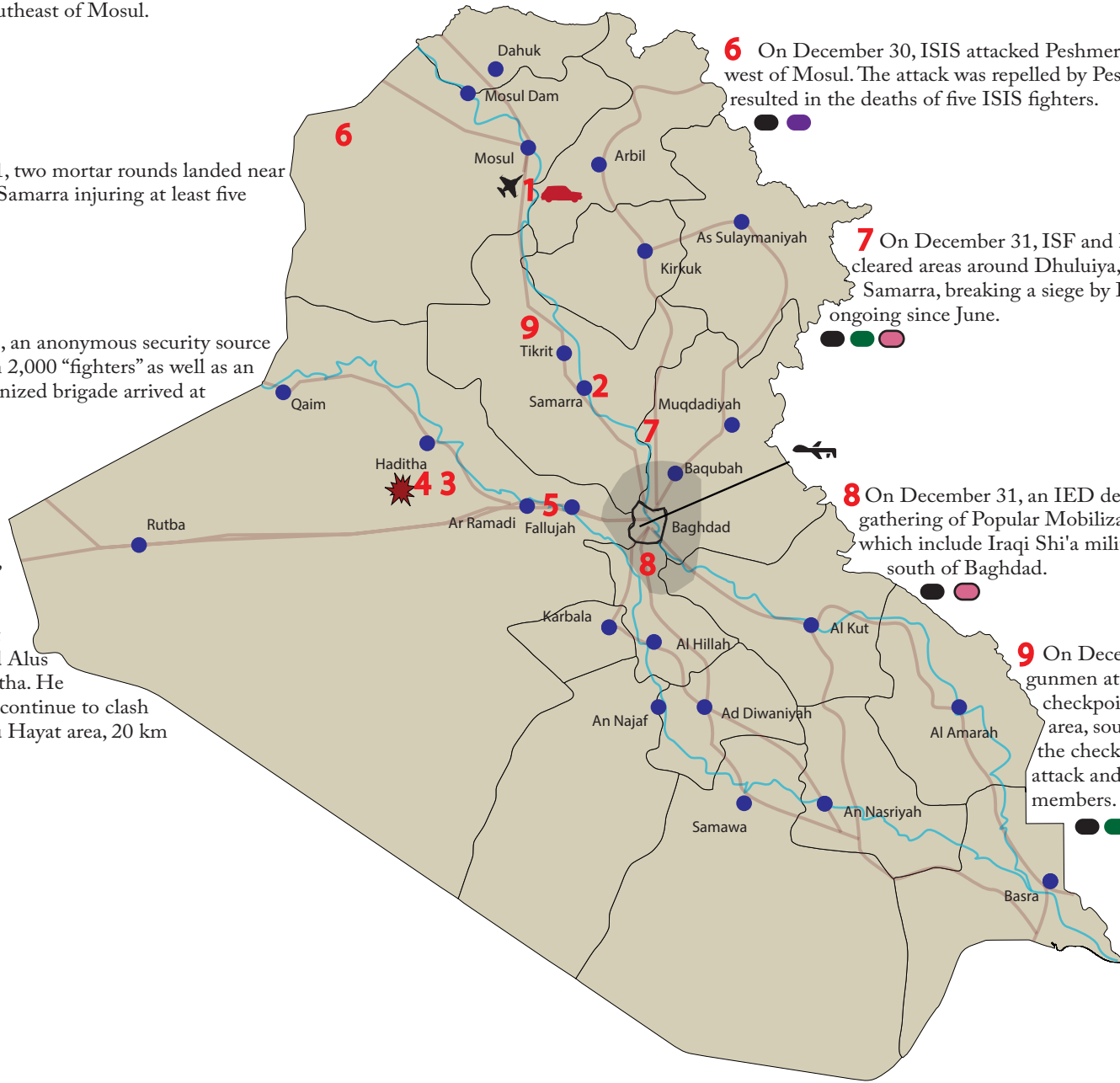
7 On December 31, ISF and Iraqi Shi'a militias cleared areas around Dhuluiya, southeast of Samarra, breaking a siege by ISIS that has been ongoing since June.



8 On December 31, an IED detonated targeting a gathering of Popular Mobilization Units (PMUs) which include Iraqi Shi'a militias, in Latifiyah, south of Baghdad.



9 On December 30, ISIS gunmen attacked an IP checkpoint in the Albu Tuma area, south of Baiji. Forces at the checkpoint repelled the attack and killed four ISIS members.



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



Content: Sinan Adnan
Graphics: Brian Fisher

Peshmerga, local Iraqi Police, and local Iraqi Sunni tribal fighters challenged ISIS in areas near Mosul where the organization has enjoyed relative sanctuary since it took control of the city in June. This operation is of significance for its location, timing, and also for the role undertaken by Iraq Sunni tribes. Significance of tribal participation in such operations near Mosul is twofold: first, these tribes do not have a history in conducting joint operations with state actors to counter ISIS, a cooperation that requires established relationships and lines of communication with said actors that local tribes near Mosul, unlike Anbari tribes, do not enjoy, at least until this point. Second, relationships between Iraqi Arab tribes and Iraqi Kurdish Peshmerga have not been, in general, characterized by mutual trust. This is especially the case after ISIS captured areas previously under Peshmerga control, due to true or perceived cooperation between Arab tribes and ISIS. It is unclear at this time if the objective of this operation is to recapture territory for future operations toward Mosul or if this is an effort to divert ISIS resources by forcing the organization to withdraw forces from Baiji, for example, to defend these areas. ISIS likely perceives these as areas of greater importance than others further south.