

Iraq Situation Report: December 8, 2014

1 On December 8, ISIS clashed with the ISF in al-Mutasim sub-district, south of Samarra. The clashes resulted in the deaths of four Iraqi Police (IP) members and the injury of an additional five, while “dozens of ISIS fighters” were killed. ISIS reportedly still maintains control of central al-Mutasim and the ISF remain positioned on the outskirts of the sub-district.



5 On December 8, “intense” coalition airstrikes targeted ISIS positions in areas west and south of Kirkuk city in northern Iraq. The airstrikes targeted the positions of Mulla Abdullah, Maktab Khalid, and Maryam Beg in addition to a bridge near the village of Fakhir, and reportedly caused significant damage to ISIS in the area. The bridge is reported to be a significant supply point for ISIS in the area.



2 On December 8, members of the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) clashed with Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and Popular Mobilization Units (PMUs) which include Iraqi Shi’a militias, in the Hir area, northeast of Dujail in the northern belts of Baghdad.



6 On December 8, an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) exploded near a market in the Ur area in eastern Baghdad. An IED also exploded near a bakery in the Furat area in southwestern Baghdad. A Baghdad University professor was also targeted in his vehicle by an Adhesive Explosive Device (AED) in northern Baghdad city. The attacks resulted in the death of four civilians and injury of 13 civilians.

7 Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi and Interior Minister Mohammed al-Ghaban arrived in Karbala in south central Iraq to review the security plans for the Arbaeen religious pilgrimage in the city which is slated to take place on December 13.

3 On December 8, ISIS attacked ISF positions in the Huz area in central Ramadi. The attack was repelled by ISF personnel and anti-ISIS tribal fighters.



4 On December 8, an unnamed source stated that ISIS members and their families are openly and frequently traveling between the border areas of Qaim in Iraq and Albu Kamal in Syria. The source added that ISIS members are engaged in commercial activities between the two sides of the border and that coalition airstrikes have targeted ISIS along the border.



- Major Cities
- Anti-ISIS Tribes
- ✈ Airstrikes
- ✈ Armed Drones
- ✳ Major Clash
- Iraqi Shi’a militias
- Coalition
- ISF
- ISIS



Content: Ahmed Ali & William Schenkel
Graphics: Brian Fisher

There is an ongoing and intensified push by the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) in areas north of Baghdad and near Samarra. ISIS is clashing with the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and Iraqi Shi’a militias within the Popular Mobilization Units (PMUs) in areas close to Samarra in order to isolate the ISF and likely also to mount attacks on Samarra which is home to an important religious shrine. Samarra has been well-fortified since June of this year, but ISIS activities will likely force the deployment of further reinforcements by the ISF and PMUs. These ISIS activities are taking place as the ISF and Iraqi government are gearing up for the December 13 Arbaeen religious pilgrimage which will witness thousands of pilgrims walking to the city of Karbala in south central Iraq. In the past, the Arbaeen pilgrimage was targeted by ISIS and ISIS will likely seek to target it again this year. The pilgrimage will represent another test for the ISF and PMUs as ISIS continues to engage them on fronts elsewhere in Iraq. It will be important to watch if ISIS targets the pilgrimage with spectacular attacks including Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Devices (VBIEDs) in order to rejuvenate its base and also send a message that it is still able to operate in southern Iraq.