

# Iraq Situation Report: January 9-11, 2015

**1** On January 9-10, ISIS launched a surprise attack on Gwer sub-district, southeast of Mosul, killing 26 members of the Asayesh, the Kurdish security forces. According to Iraqi Kurdish sources, ISIS gunmen infiltrated the area by crossing the Zab River using boats. ISIS took control of the area for “one hour” before Kurdish forces launched a counter-attack and retook control of Gwer. A Kurdish officer stated that the clashes killed 60 ISIS gunmen. The commander of the Peshmerga in the area, Sirwan Barzani, reported that 160 ISIS gunmen crossed into Gwer and carried out the attack. On January 10, CENTCOM reported that coalition airstrikes targeted a bridge “near” Arbil that was under ISIS control in addition to targeting an ISIS “tactical unit” near Mosul.



**2** On January 10, an anonymous security source from Salah ad-Din reported that ISIS prohibited residents of Tikrit and Alam, east of Tikrit, from leaving their areas.



**3** On January 10, ISIS launched an assault on the villages of Dwizat Tahtani, Dwizat Fuqani, and Tal al-Sheir, located east of Qayarra sub-district, south of Mosul. ISIS took control of the vilages killing seven members of the “Popular Mobilization,” most likely a reference to Iraqi Sunni anti-ISIS tribal fighters. The clashes reportedly killed 30 ISIS fighters. On January 11, forces from the 1st Battalion of the 5th Brigade of the IA, Peshmerga, and tribal fighters reportedly retook control of Said Sultan Abdullah, east of Qayarra, although clashes in the village re-erupted on January 11 killing five ISIS members and destroying two ISIS vehicles. The source did not specify the IA division but the IA forces were almost certainly from the newly formed 19th Division.



**4** On January 10, IA Aviation targeted an ISIS position near Maktab Khalid crossing, southwest of Kirkuk, killing 17 ISIS members. Also, ISIS gunmen opened fire injuring a displaced person at the crossing who was being prevented from crossing into Peshmerga-controlled territory. On January 11, a security source from Kirkuk reported that ISIS “withheld” dozens of families attempting to use the crossing. The source added that ISIS separated young men and “informed” them that they need to fight alongside ISIS.



**5** On January 9, an anonymous source from the IP reported that unidentified gunmen attempted to storm Arab Jubur IP Station. The source added that a force from the IA 17th Division intervened in the clashes. On January 10, commander of Baghdad Operations Command (BOC), General Abdul-Amir al-Shamari, denied that there was an attack on the station and explained that the clashes took place when forces from the 2nd Battalion of the 23rd Brigade, likely from the 17th Division ambushed an unspecified number of gunmen as they attempted to emplace two IEDs in Shirifat Village “10-15 km from the station.” He added that the IA force killed “a number from them” while others left the area.



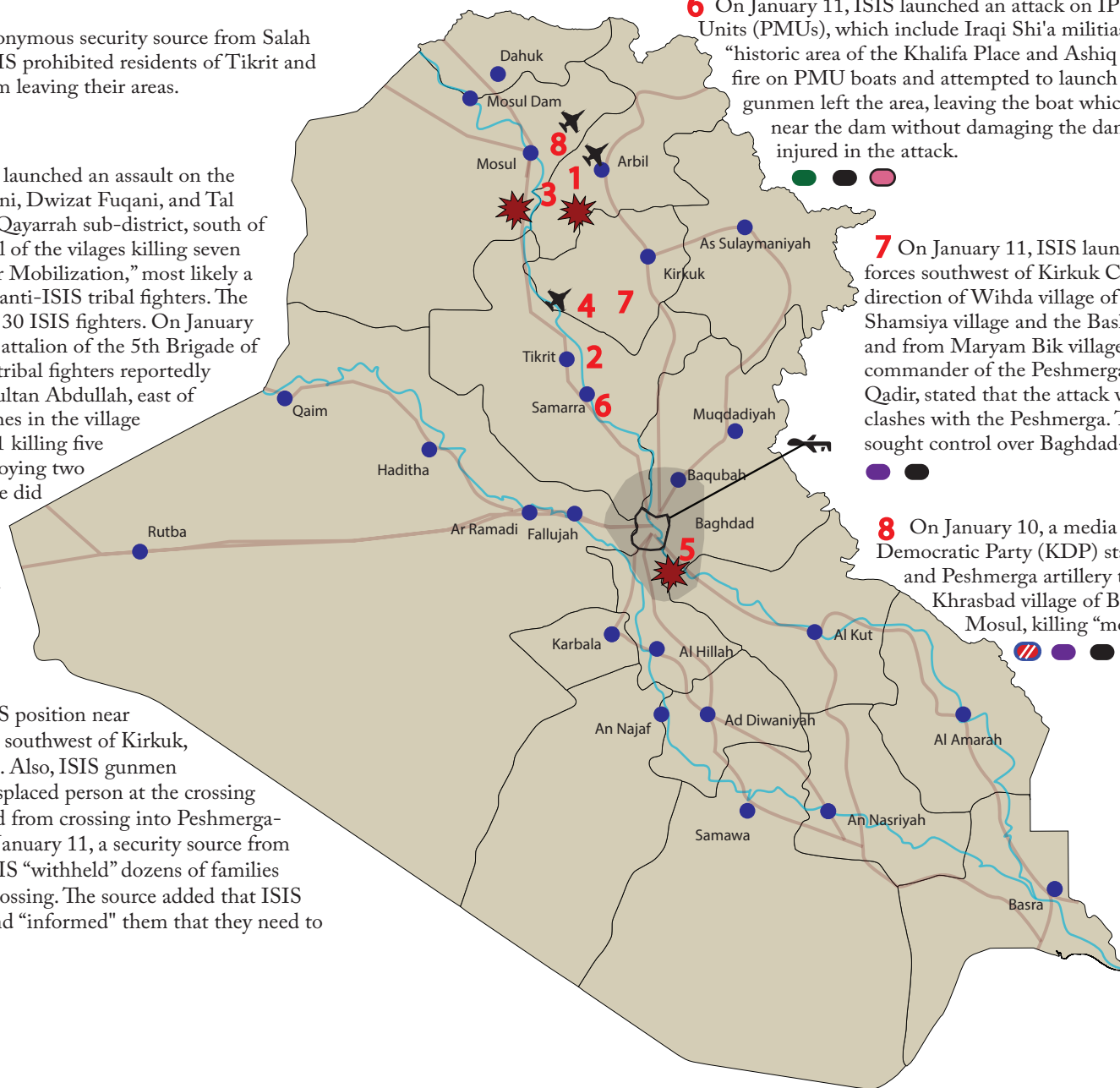
**6** On January 11, ISIS launched an attack on IP and Popular Mobilization Units (PMUs), which include Iraqi Shi'a militias, near Samarra Dam in the “historic area of the Khalifa Place and Ashiq Palace.” ISIS gunmen opened fire on PMU boats and attempted to launch an IED carried by boat. ISIS gunmen left the area, leaving the boat which was then detonated by the IP near the dam without damaging the dam. Two PMU members were injured in the attack.



**7** On January 11, ISIS launched an attack on Peshmerga forces southwest of Kirkuk City from three axes: the direction of Wihda village of Daquq district, from the Shamsiya village and the Bashir area of Taza sub-district, and from Maryam Bik village of Rashad sub-district. The commander of the Peshmerga in the area, General Rasul Qadir, stated that the attack was repelled after intense clashes with the Peshmerga. The general added that ISIS sought control over Baghdad-Kirkuk highway.



**8** On January 10, a media official from the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) stated that coalition airstrikes and Peshmerga artillery targeted an ISIS position in Khrasbad village of Bashiqa sub-district, east of Mosul, killing “more than” 20 ISIS members.



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

100km



Content: Sinan Adnan  
Graphics: Nichole Dicharry

The area of Gwer, southeast of Mosul was the closest ISIS gunmen came to Arbil, the capital of Iraqi Kurdistan, in August of 2014 prompting U.S. airstrikes to target the organization in the area and prevent its advance. The previous advance of ISIS into Gwer most likely aimed to divert Peshmerga resources to thwart a counter-offensive launched by the KDP's Peshmerga after they were expelled from Sinjar district, west of Mosul. This recent attack appears to have the same motive, especially following the recent advance of the Peshmerga in Sinjar and Ayadhiya sub-district north of Tal Afar district. ISIS also attempted to roll back the Peshmerga, Iraqi Sunni tribal fighters, and the IA in areas recently captured by the combined forces, east of Qayarra, south of Mosul. ISIS will most likely continue its attempts to retake these newly captured areas. They may also attempt to disrupt the combined forces' presence in these areas to prevent anti-ISIS forces from using areas east of Qayarra as staging grounds for further operations south towards northern Salah ad-Din province and west towards the south of Mosul. Meanwhile, ISIS prevention of displaced persons from crossing from ISIS-controlled to Peshmerga-controlled territory at the Maktab Khalid crossing is exacerbating the humanitarian situation there. Arab Jubur is an area that lies near Baghdad. ISIS's predecessor, al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) enjoyed wide freedom of movement there during the sectarian war in 2005-2008. It is difficult at this time to verify the reported attack upon Arab Jubur's IP Station, but if the attack did occur this would represent a major escalation and a threat to Baghdad's security. Although such areas most likely have a concentration of Iraqi Shi'a militias, it is important to watch such areas around Baghdad as potential flash points that can be used by ISIS to stage attacks on Baghdad.