

# Iraq Situation Report: January 4-7, 2015

**1** On January 6, ISIS launched four “rockets” from multiple areas near Hit district, targeting al-Asad Airbase, west of Hit. Rear Admiral John Kirby minimized the threat from these indirect fire attacks, describing them as “unguided and unobserved events.” North of the base, ISIS launched an attack on Baghdadi sub-district from the direction of Juba village, north of Baghdadi, and captured the bridge that connects the two areas. Following the attack, a “senior” anonymous source from Jazeera and Badia Operations Command (JBOC) stated that military reinforcements from JBOC were sent to the area to prevent the fall of Baghdadi and that nine coalition airstrikes targeted ISIS fighters who attempted to cross the Euphrates from the “northwestern side and the southern side of Baghdadi” to prevent ISIS from positioning fighters in the nearby orchards. Also, an attacker with a Suicide Vest (SVEST) targeted IP members guarding a mosque in Juba, north of Baghdadi, killing four IP members and injuring three others. On January 7, an anonymous source from Anbar Operations Command (AOC) stated that coalition airstrikes targeted a convoy of 43 vehicles headed to Baghdadi in an area “near Hit.” On January 7, forces from the 7th IA Division and tribal fighters launched an operation to retake the Juba area, north of Baghdadi, reportedly killing 42 ISIS fighters and taking control of the area.

**6** On January 5, unidentified gunmen targeted a Saudi border patrol near a position of Saudi border guards on the Iraqi-Saudi border. The position is known as Swef in the Jadidat Arar area. The Saudi Interior Ministry stated that the patrol repelled the attack and arrested one of the gunmen while another gunman detonated an SVEST he wore. Later, Saudi Border Guard Command stated that the attack killed the commander of the Northern Area border, General Oda Miwadh al-Balwi and a Saudi soldier in addition to injuring the Commander of Operations at the position, Colonel Salim al-Anzai. Another report indicated that the explosion was the result of a Tanker SVBIED. Iraqi National Security advisor Mowafaq al-Rubai stated that Saudi ground forces supported by the Saudi Air Force launched an operation to combat “ISIS inside its territory.”

**2** On January 5, ISF and Popular Mobilization Units (PMUs) which includes Iraqi Shia militias clashed with ISIS in Baiji reportedly killing 26 ISIS members and destroying three ISIS vehicles and a rocket launchpad.

**3** On January 6, ISIS attacked the Albu Risha area, north of Ramadi, but the attack was reportedly repelled by ISF and tribal fighters and military reinforcements arrived at the area. The IP station in the area was “relocated” to a safer location although “eyewitnesses” and an anonymous security source reported that ISIS demolished the station using IEDs.

**4** On January 6, ISIS executed 20 young men from the Hamam al-Alil area, south of Mosul, for “robberies, blackmail of residents, and for impersonating ISIS members in the area.” ISIS also executed three female lawyers who previously worked for the criminal court of Mosul after ISIS kidnapped them in September of 2014.

**5** On or shortly before January 6, meetings took place between Speaker of the CoR Salim al-Juburi; national security advisor Falih al-Fayadh; Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, a major ally of Iran who is now the “deputy chairman of the Popular Mobilization Commission”; and Iraqi Sunni tribal leaders from Diyala. Speaker Juburi stated that the 6,000 individuals, presumably from Diyala, will be recruited in the “army and tribal forces.” Muhandis has also visited Anbar and Kirkuk recently.

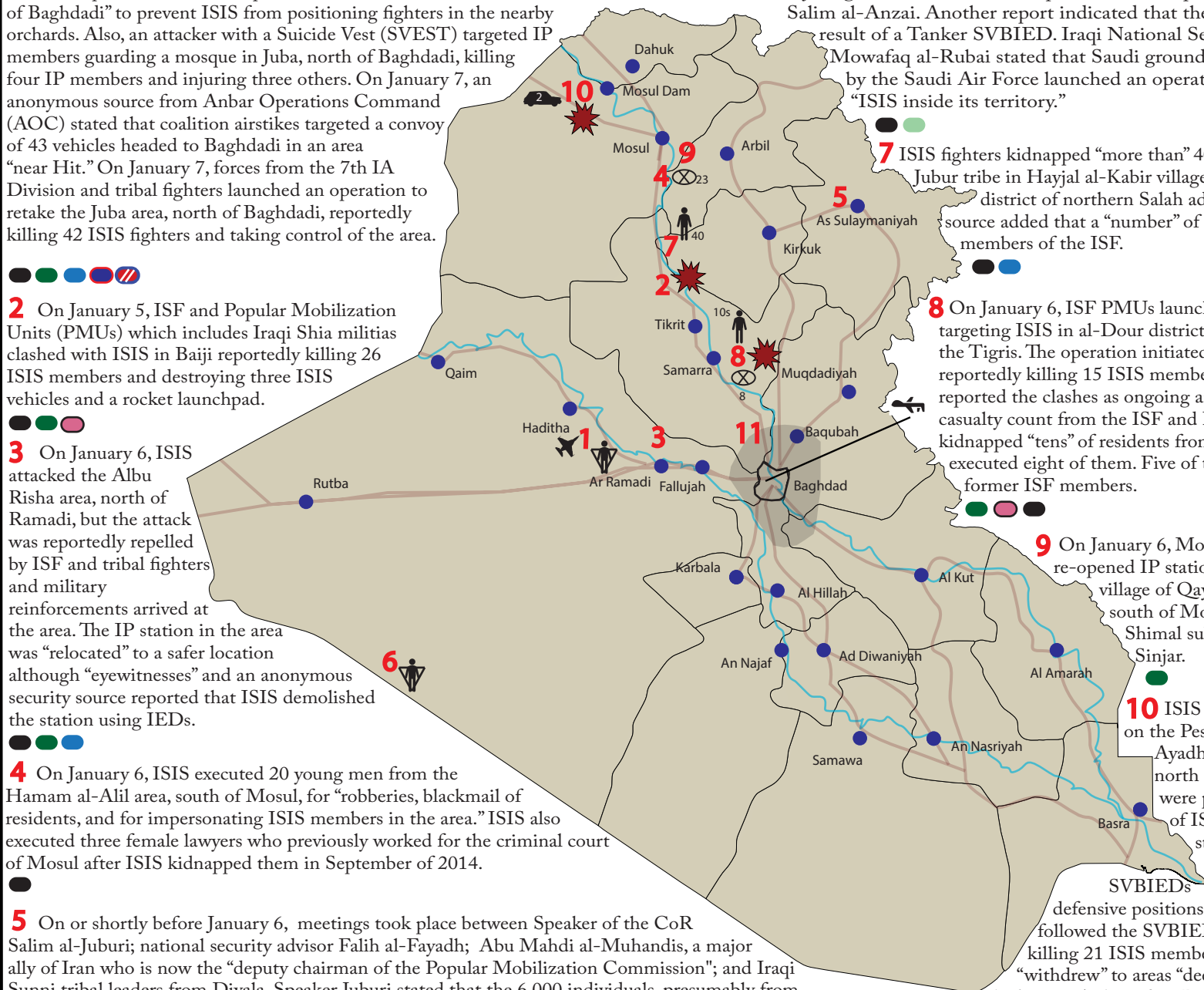
**7** ISIS fighters kidnapped “more than” 40 members of the Jubur tribe in Hayjal al-Kabir village, east of Sharqat district of northern Salah ad-Din Province. The source added that a “number” of the kidnapped were members of the ISF.

**8** On January 6, ISF PMUs launched an operation targeting ISIS in al-Dour district, east of Tikrit across the Tigris. The operation initiated clashes with ISIS, reportedly killing 15 ISIS members. The source reported the clashes as ongoing and did not report a casualty count from the ISF and PMUs. Also, ISIS kidnapped “tens” of residents from al-Dour and executed eight of them. Five of the executed were former ISF members.

**9** On January 6, MoI stated that it re-opened IP stations in Tel al-Sheir village of Qayarah sub-district, south of Mosul, and in the Shimal sub-district, north of Sinjar.

**10** ISIS launched an attack on the Peshmerga in areas of Ayadhiya sub-district north of Tal Afar that were previously cleared of ISIS. The attack started with the detonation of two SVBIEDs against Peshmerga defensive positions. Intense clashes followed the SVBIEDs, reportedly killing 21 ISIS members while the rest “withdrew” to areas “deep” in Ayadhiya sub-district. At least four Peshmerga members were killed and three others injured. The source explained that the Peshmerga forced a premature detonation of the SVBIEDs. Meanwhile, ISIS detonated IEDs targeting Shamdukha Bridge in the Kasik area, northeast of Tal Afar to prevent further deployment of anti-ISIS forces to the areas.

**11** On January 7, ISF and PMUs launched an operation to clear the Nebai area, north of Baghdad of ISIS. The operation remains ongoing and has resulted so far in the death of 10 ISIS members.



- Major Cities
- Kidnapping
- Major Clash
- SVBIED
- Airstrikes
- SVEST
- Armed Drones
- Execution
- Coalition
- Iraqi Shi'a militias
- ISF
- ISIS
- Saudi Forces
- USA
- Peshmerga
- Anti-ISIS Iraqi Sunni Tribes



Content: Sinan Adnan  
Graphics: Brian Fisher

ISIS has increased its pressure on strategic areas in Anbar Province. These areas have been attacked by ISIS before but January 6 witnessed an increase in the tempo of kinetic engagements initiated by ISIS in central and western Anbar. ISIS targeted the Albu Risha area, northwest of Ramadi which is a stronghold for the Awakening (Sahwa) forces and appears to have gained ground in the area although the current status of the area remains unclear. ISIS also increased its operational tempo near the al-Asad Airbase, which houses U.S. military personnel, indicating that the group has gained more freedom of movement in this area recently. Moving north, ISIS launched multiple attacks to regain territory it recently lost to the Peshmerga and ISF in areas west of Mosul that can be used as a potential staging ground for anti-ISIS forces to retake Mosul. Also, the presence of the Peshmerga and ISF in areas on the roads west of Mosul has almost certainly minimized the amount of supplies ISIS can move between Mosul and Syrian territory. The government is also attempting to re-establish its formal presence in areas of northern Iraq that have been a no-go zone for the ISF since the fall of Mosul in June of 2014 by re-opening IP stations in these areas. Finally, Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, a strong ally of Iran and a major figure within Iraqi Shi'a militias has recently visited areas of Anbar, Kirkuk, and Diyala. While the militias had and continue to have a notable role in the security portfolio in Diyala, Anbar and Kirkuk, for the most part, have not witnessed such involvement. It will be important to watch for the outcome of these visits on the ground, especially if militias launch operations in these areas. This would represent an expansion of an Iranian role and influence in Iraq.