

# Iraq Situation Report: January 29-30, 2015

**1** On January 30, ISIS launched an assault from three directions on Peshmerga position south and southwest of Kirkuk City. ISIS used gunmen along with three VBIEDs in the attack. The assault initiated intense clashes with the Peshmerga and ISIS in the Tal al-Ward, Maktab Khalid, and Maryam Bik areas, southwest of Kirkuk City. An anonymous source from Kirkuk described the attack as the “most violent” since the fall of Mosul adding that ISIS massed fighters from Diyala, Mosul, and Tikrit for the assault and that these forces “gathered for a week” in areas of Hawija, Riyadh, and Rashad, west of Kirkuk City. Also, dozens of residents from the nearby villages of Bayachi, Tawakulan, and Tub Zawa fled their areas as result of the clashes. The Peshmerga launched a counter attack and reportedly expelled ISIS from the areas it initially captured. Following the attack, ISIS members infiltrated the Khabaz oilfield located in the Mula-Abdullah area 30 km southwest of Kirkuk City and “seized” 15 employees. Anonymous medical sources reported that 28 Peshmerga members were killed and 173 others were injured. An anonymous source from Hawija hospital reported that the hospital received the bodies of 103 ISIS fighters killed in the clashes along with 140 wounded.

**2** On January 30, a VBIED or SVBIED detonated near Kirkuk Police Directorate in central Kirkuk. An attacker with an SVEST also attempted to storm the directorate but was killed by guards. Following the detonation, four unidentified gunmen wearing SVESTs took positions in an abandoned hotel known as “Qasir Kirkuk” [Kirkuk Palace] located south of the directorate. Police and Asayesh [internal Kurdish security forces] forces cordoned off the building and reportedly killed two of the gunmen with sniper fire. The other two reportedly detonated their SVESTs after the security forces “closed in” on them. Security forces imposed a curfew on the city at 1000 local time, although the curfew was lifted later in the day.

**3** On January 30, an IED detonated in a popular market in Bab al-Sharji commercial area of central Baghdad. An IED then detonated, targeting security forces that arrived the site following the attack. The attacks killed eight individuals and injured 22 others. Following the attacks, Iraqi Security Forces blocked the nearby Jumhuriya Bridge that leads to the Green Zone on the other side of the river. The ISF also blocked roads close to the nearby Tahrir and Tayaran squares. Also, three mortar rounds landed on the Said Mohammed garage, Balad garage, and a textile factory, all in Kadhmiya area of northwestern Baghdad injuring at least seven individuals.

**4** On January 30, ISIS launched an attack on Peshmerga positions in the areas of Iski and Kaski, in addition to the villages of Qadisiya, Tal al-Rif, Iliya, and Shandukha, west of Mosul. The Peshmerga reportedly repelled the attacks killing “30” ISIS members while three Peshmerga members were injured.

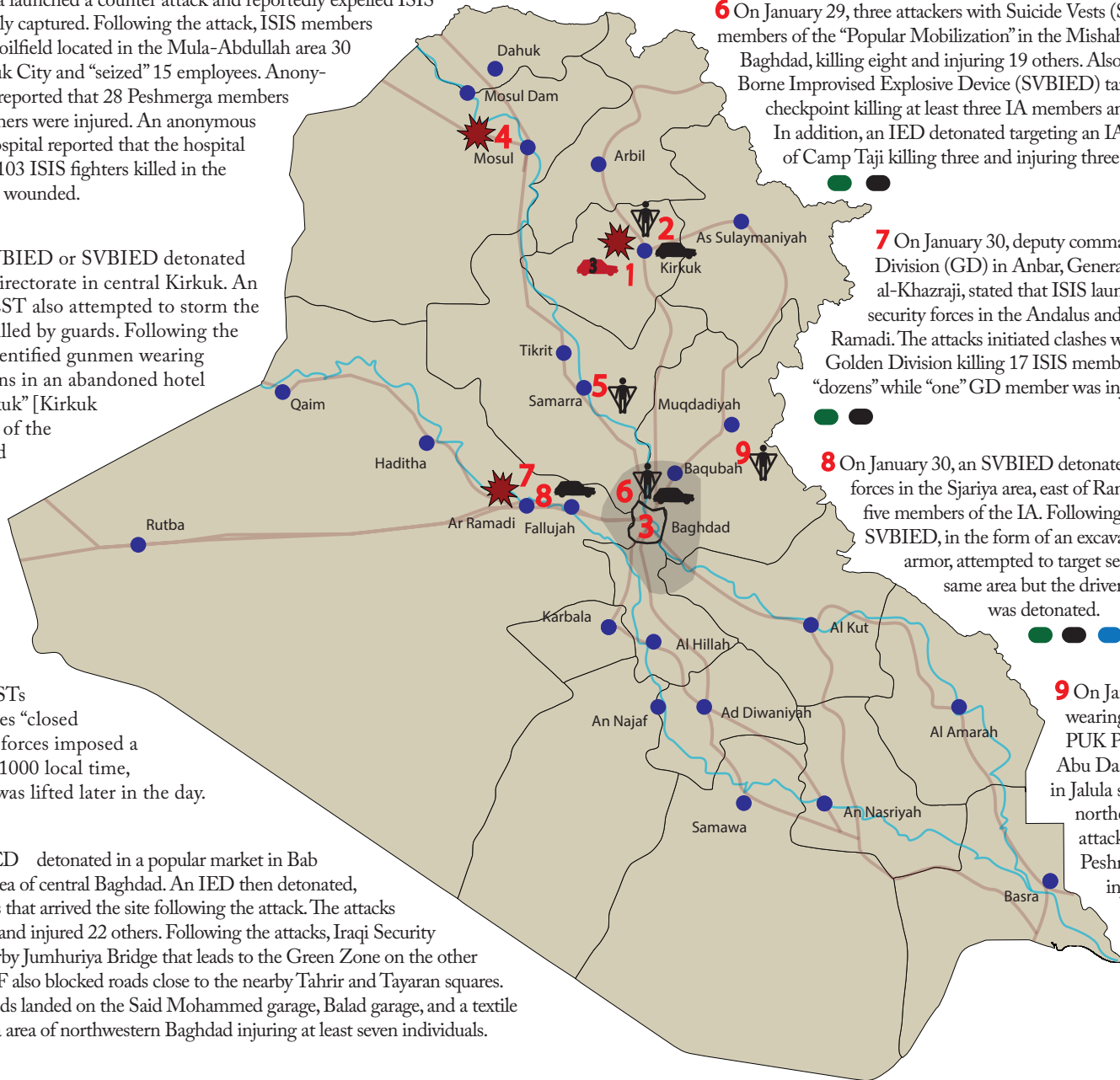
**5** On January 30, two attackers wearing SVESTs detonated their explosives targeting a position of the “Popular Mobilization” in the Azawi Hotel in the Albu Nissan area of western Samarra. The attack killed seven and injured 24 from the “Popular Mobilization” and Federal Police. Following the attacks, Samarra Operations Command (SOC) imposed a general curfew on Samarra. Spokesperson of the Interior Ministry, General Saad Maan stated that forces from the 5th Division of the Federal Police killed three attackers wearing SVESTs in the Sinai neighborhood of central Samarra.

**6** On January 29, three attackers with Suicide Vests (SVESTs) attacked members of the “Popular Mobilization” in the Mishahda area north of Baghdad, killing eight and injuring 19 others. Also, a Suicide Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Device (SVBIED) targeted an IA security checkpoint killing at least three IA members and injuring seven others. In addition, an IED detonated targeting an IA patrol in the vicinity of Camp Taji killing three and injuring three others.

**7** On January 30, deputy commander of the Golden Division (GD) in Anbar, General Abdul-Amir al-Khazraji, stated that ISIS launched an attack on security forces in the Andalus and Shurta areas of central Ramadi. The attacks initiated clashes with forces of the Golden Division killing 17 ISIS members and injuring “dozens” while “one” GD member was injured.

**8** On January 30, an SVBIED detonated targeting security forces in the Sjariya area, east of Ramadi, injuring at least five members of the IA. Following the attack, another SVBIED, in the form of an excavator outfitted with armor, attempted to target security forces in the same area but the driver was killed before it was detonated.

**9** On January 30, an attacker wearing an SVEST targeted PUK Peshmerga forces in the Abu Daraji village of Tiji area in Jalula sub-district, located northeast of Baquba. The attack killed seven Peshmerga members and injured seven others.



- Major Cities
- ★ Major Clash
- 🚗 VBIED
- 🚗 SVBIED
- 👤 Kidnapping
- 🚁 Armed Drones
- ISF
- ISIS
- 👤 SVEST
- Anti-ISIS Iraqi Sunni Tribes
- 🚩 Coalition
- Iraqi Shi'a militias
- Peshmerga



Content: Sinan Adnan & ISW Iraq Team  
Graphics: John Sauerhoff

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ISIS launched the largest attack on the Peshmerga of the Kurdish PUK in Kirkuk province since the fall of Mosul. The conventional ground assault was accompanied by asymmetric tactics such as SVESTs and VBIEDs supporting the attack. The areas where ISIS attacked represent the first lines of defense for Kirkuk and are also crucial because of their proximity to the North Oil Company oil fields. Given the extensive resources ISIS funneled into the Kirkuk attack, it is clear that this was the main effort with the possible intention to establish temporary positions that would then be used to launch further attacks toward Kirkuk. More Peshmerga forces will likely be deployed to this area in order to defend Kirkuk and protect this critical infrastructure. This attack, coupled with those that occurred west of Mosul, and in Samarra, Jalula, and Baghdad appear to have been an effort by ISIS to restore its momentum following its recent defeats in Diyala and west of Mosul.