

Iraq Situation Report: November 10 - 19, 2015

1 Peshmerga launch major operations to recapture Sinjar. KDP Peshmerga launched an operation on November 12 to recapture Sinjar on three axes with heavy Coalition airstrikes and Coalition advisers in an advise and assist capacity. Forces from the PKK, YPG, and local Yazidi militias also participated. Peshmerga, YPG, YPJ, PKK, and Yazidi militias recaptured Sinjar on November 13; surrounding villages between November 14 and 16; and the road link between Sinjar and al-Hawl in Syria on November 16.

2 Security forces launch operations against ISIS militants near Haditha. Jazeera and Badia Operations Command (JBOC) forces launched an operation against ISIS in Albu Hayat southeast of Haditha on November 10, and killed three ISIS members wearing SVESTs on November 15.

3 Peshmerga and Turkmen proxy militias clash in mixed demographic town. Turkmen Badr Organization fighters clashed with Peshmerga and Arab tribal fighters and reportedly broke a truce on November 13. Proxy militia leaders and forces from Badr Organization, Kata'ib al-Hezbollah, and Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq; an Iranian delegation; the Sadrist-aligned Saraya al-Salam; Kurdish PUK officials; ISF commanders and forces; and a crisis cell formed by PM Abadi descended on Tuz Khurmato to settle the dispute

4 ISF continue operations in Ramadi's environs. Counter-Terrorism Service (CTS) recaptured the Ramadi western train station on November 14. ISF and Coalition airstrikes destroyed four VBIEDs north of Ramadi on November 15. Anbar Operations Command (AOC) also sent 500 reinforcements to reinforce the 10th

5 Protesters call for reforms and an end to corruption throughout southern Iraq. Demonstrators gathered in Najaf, Diwaniyah, Dhi Qar, Wasit, Karbala, Muthanna, Basra, Babil, and Maysan on November 13. Protestors also demonstrated in the Karrada district of Baghdad.

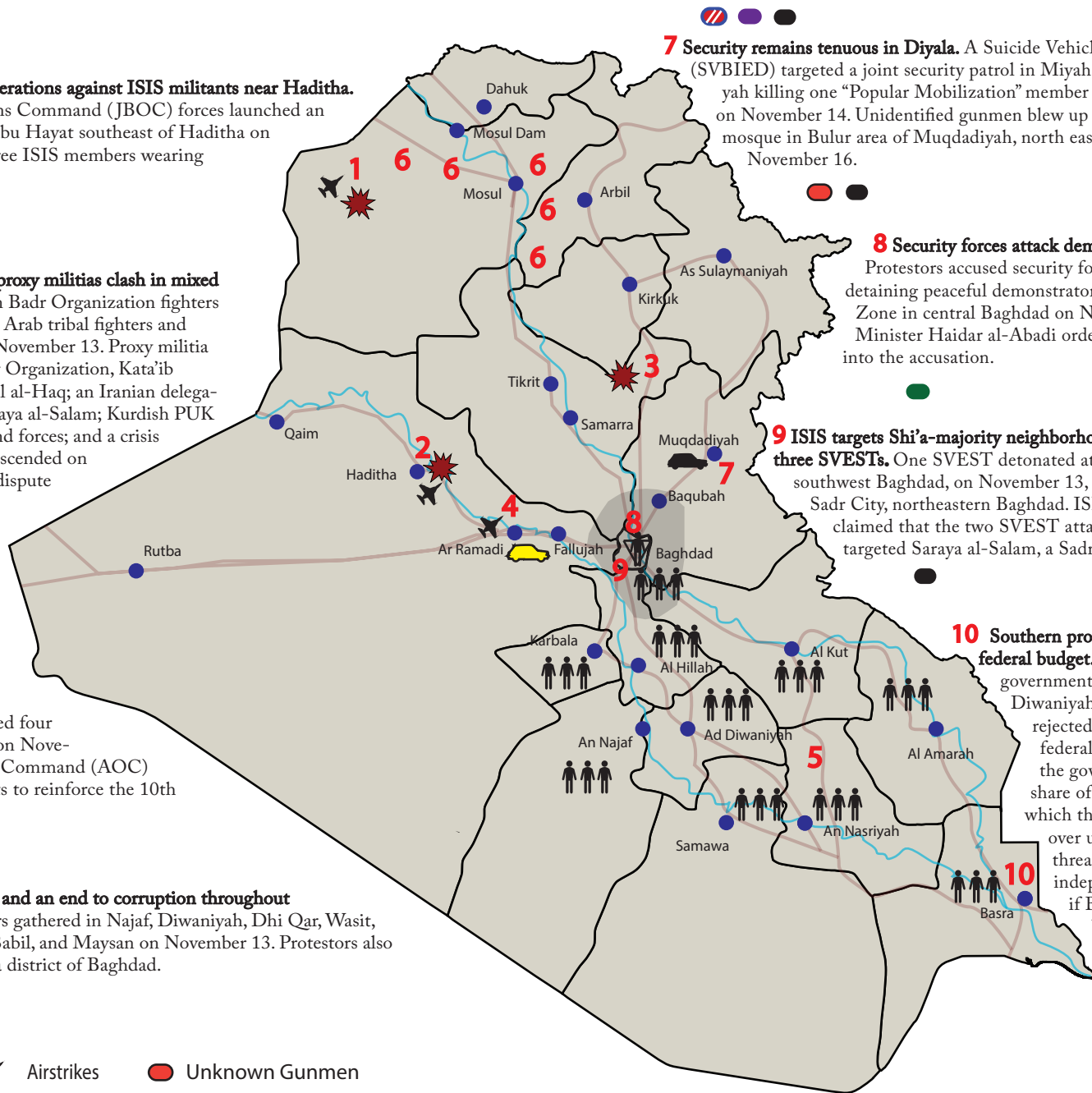
6 ISIS launches retaliatory attacks against Peshmerga positions following Peshmerga operation in Sinjar. ISIS retaliated for the loss of Sinjar with hasty attacks on Peshmerga in Gwer on November 12, near Sinjar on November 14, Makhmur on November 16, Zumar on November 16, Bashiqaq on November 18, and Iski Mosul on November 18 and 19. Peshmerga and coalition airstrikes repelled the attacks.

7 Security remains tenuous in Diyala. A Suicide Vehicle-Bourne IED (SVBIED) targeted a joint security patrol in Miyah village near Muqdadiyah killing one "Popular Mobilization" member and injuring one other on November 14. Unidentified gunmen blew up the Abu Hanifa mosque in Bulur area of Muqdadiyah, north east of Baqubah on November 16.

8 Security forces attack demonstrators in Baghdad. Protestors accused security forces of attacking and detaining peaceful demonstrators outside of the Green Zone in central Baghdad on November 17. Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi order a full investigation into the accusation.

9 ISIS targets Shi'a-majority neighborhoods in Baghdad with three SVESTs. One SVEST detonated at a funeral in Amil, southwest Baghdad, on November 13, and two exploded in Sadr City, northeastern Baghdad. ISIS's Wilayat Baghdad claimed that the two SVEST attacks in Sadr City targeted Saraya al-Salam, a Sadrist militia.

10 Southern provinces reject 2016 federal budget. The provincial governments of Basra, Dhi Qar, Diwaniyah, and Muthanna rejected the draft of the 2016 federal budget and demanded the government increase their share of the budget. Basra, which the budget previously over unfair oil prices, threatened to export oil independently like the KRG if Baghdad did not address budget



- Major Cities
- ✈ Airstrikes
- Unknown Gunmen
- 🚗 SVBIED
- 👤 Parade
- 👤 Iraqi Shi'a Militias
- 🔥 Major Clash
- 🚚 Coalition
- 👤 Peshmerga
- ISIS
- 👤 SVEST
- ISF
- 👤 Yazidi Volunteers
- PKK
- 🚗 Failed S/VBIED
- Anti-ISIS Iraqi Sunni Tribes
- YPG

Content: Patrick Martin and ISW Iraq Team
Graphics: Logan Brog

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The combined Kurdish offensive against ISIS in Sinjar is less significant as a tactical gain against ISIS than as a symbolic victory for multiple Kurdish factions that will ultimately compete for dominance. Coalition airstrikes and advisers supported the KDP Peshmerga operation, while fighters from the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), the Syrian Women's and People's Protection Units (YPJ and YPG), and local Yazidi militias also participated. The competition between the KDP and the PKK will likely intensify during the ongoing political crisis in Iraqi Kurdistan over the KDP-held regional presidency. PKK and Peshmerga mobilization in Iraq, even when directed against ISIS, threatens local Arab populations who fear Kurdish occupation on both sides of the Iraq-Syria border. It also threatens Turkey, among other regional actors, who fear Kurdish autonomy and the potential for Kurdish forces to gain the upper hand in Mosul ultimately. The Kurdish victory at Sinjar therefore requires that the anti-ISIS coalition balance the interests of Kurds and Sunni Arabs in northern Iraq. Ethnic tensions were also exposed in Tuz Khurmato, where PUK Peshmerga clashed with ethnic Turkmen Iranian proxy militia members. The clash was violent enough to cause ISF, Peshmerga, and proxy militia forces to move forces to Tuz Khurmato to prevent escalation, while delegations of PUK, Iranian, Iranian proxy, and Iraqi government leaders and officials arrived to negotiate ceasefires between the combatants. This ethnic fault line challenges the interests of Iran as well as the U.S.-led coalition in a sector of northern Iraq's Disputed Internal Boundaries (DIBs) where the ISF is less dominant than either Iranian proxies or forward-deployed PUK Peshmerga. Ethnic tension and intra-Kurdish competition both work to the detriment of northern Iraq's security at a tenuous time for PM Abadi's government.