

# Iraq Situation Report: February 2, 2015

**1** On February 2, ISIS launched an attack on ‘Popular Mobilization’ forces and ISF in the area of Sur Shnas, located north of the main area of Samarra district. The attack started with the use of a truck SVBIED that targeted a security checkpoint followed by gunmen attacking security forces in the area. Clashes erupted between the two sides killing seven members of the “Popular Mobilization” and injuring 28 others. Also, the Nujaba Movement, an Iraqi Shi’a militia backed by Iran, reported that its forces dismantled an unspecified number of VBIEDs constructed using BMP vehicles in the Hwesh area, west of Samarra, that were planned to be used to target Samarra Dam. An anonymous security source reported that there were three such armored vehicles



**2** Member of Kirkuk Provincial Council Najat Hussein stated that Turkomen members of the “Popular Mobilization” deployed from areas of Amerli and Tuz Khurmatu to the areas of Taza, Daquq, and Bashir, south of Kirkuk City. He added that the forces are “cooperating” with the Peshmerga and that it was “agreed upon” that their numbers increase from “hundreds to thousands.” Hussein stated that they will be under the command of Kirkuk’s local government.



**3** Baghdad Operations Command (BOC) announced that “terrorist groups” launched an attack on IA forces from the 6th Division in the areas of Ibrahim al-Ali and Hitawin. The attacks initiated clashes killing seven of the attacking gunmen.



**4** Federal Police (FP) forces launched an attack on ISIS gunmen who attempted to target the al-Muthana facility on the road between Samarra and Thar Thar. The force reportedly killed “dozens” of ISIS gunmen.



**5** A force from the Iraqi Police (IP) found two unidentified dead bodies with gunshot wounds to the head and chest in the Sada area of Sadr City, northeastern Baghdad.



**6** Forces from Military Intelligence targeted “ISIS” positions in the area of Abu Ghraib, west of Baghdad, using Multiple Rocket Launchers.



- Major Cities
- ★ Major Clash
- ✈ Armed Drones

- ✈ Airstrikes
- 🚚 SVBIED
- 👤 Kidnapping

- ⊗ Execution
- ISF
- ISIS

- Unknown Gunmen
- Anti-ISIS Iraqi Sunni Tribes
- ▨ Coalition

- Iraqi Shi’a militias
- Peshmerga



Content: ISW Iraq Team  
Graphics: John Sauerhoff

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ISIS is going on the offensive in areas of strategic importance for the ISF and Iranian-backed militias to deny such forces freedom of movement between Samarra and its environs and the eastern Anbar front. The road on which ISIS has launched attacks in the past two days represent a strategic line of communication (LOC) for both the ISF and the militias on one side and ISIS on the other side. The attacks most likely originated from the Thar Thar region, north of Fallujah. This area has, so far, not witnessed a major effort by the ISF or the militias to minimize ISIS’s ability to launch attacks toward Samarra. ISIS, and most likely other groups such as Jaysh al-Mujahidin, are also using the environs of Fallujah to keep the ISF and militias from taking a serious offensive posture toward Fallujah. Elsewhere in Iraq, the militias have previously conducted joint operations with the PUK Peshmerga in areas located south of Kirkuk City but the last week has witnessed an increase of reports regarding additional militia deployments to this area. It will be important to watch if the militias are going to launch a major effort to clear Bashir village from ISIS, an area of an Iraqi Shi’a majority that was taken by ISIS following the fall of Mosul. It will also be important to watch if the militias expand their operations further west toward Hawija district. If the militias launch such an effort, it would most likely be in coordination with the PUK government of Kirkuk and its Peshmerga, who almost certainly see Hawija and its environs as a source of serious threat toward Kirkuk City. This is especially the case after the recent attack on Kirkuk by ISIS originating from Hawija.