

Iraq Situation Report: February 7-8, 2015

1 On February 8, ISIS demolished 20 homes in Hawija district, southwestern Kirkuk Province, using IEDs.



2 On February 8, a source from Anbar Operations Command (AOC) stated that the Iraqi Air Force targeted an ISIS headquarters in the Mualimin neighborhood of Rawa district, western Anbar. The source further stated that the strike killed the ISIS "military leader of the district" and four of his aides, and destroyed nine ISIS vehicles and destroyed nine ISIS vehicles.



3 A source from AOC stated that ISIS gunmen launched an attack on IA forces near the Roud Bridge in Garma sub-district, northeast of Fallujah. The source added that the IA repelled the attack and killed three attackers wearing Suicide Vests (SVESTs).



4 On February 8, an anonymous security source stated that a Humvee SVBIED attempted to "advance toward" the regulatory dam of Thar Thar lake, northeast of Ramadi, but security forces thwarted the attempt by "detonating the vehicle and killing [the driver]"



5 On February 7, an attacker detonated his SVEST targeting a local restaurant in Baghdad al-Jadida area near Al-Baydha Theater, located in eastern Baghdad. The detonation killed 22 individuals and injured 33 others. Also in Baghdad, an attack by a militant wearing an SVEST alongside an emplaced IED targeted the local Arabi market in the commercial Shorja area, eastern Baghdad, killing nine individuals and injuring 27 others.



6 On February 7, "intense" coalition airstrikes targeting ISIS headquarters building in the western Mosul including the former headquarters military intelligence located near the Sinai neighborhood. The targets were reportedly explosives workshops. A source from the forensic medicine of Mosul reported that the strikes killed 13 ISIS members and injured nine others. The source noted that the casualty count is likely to increase.

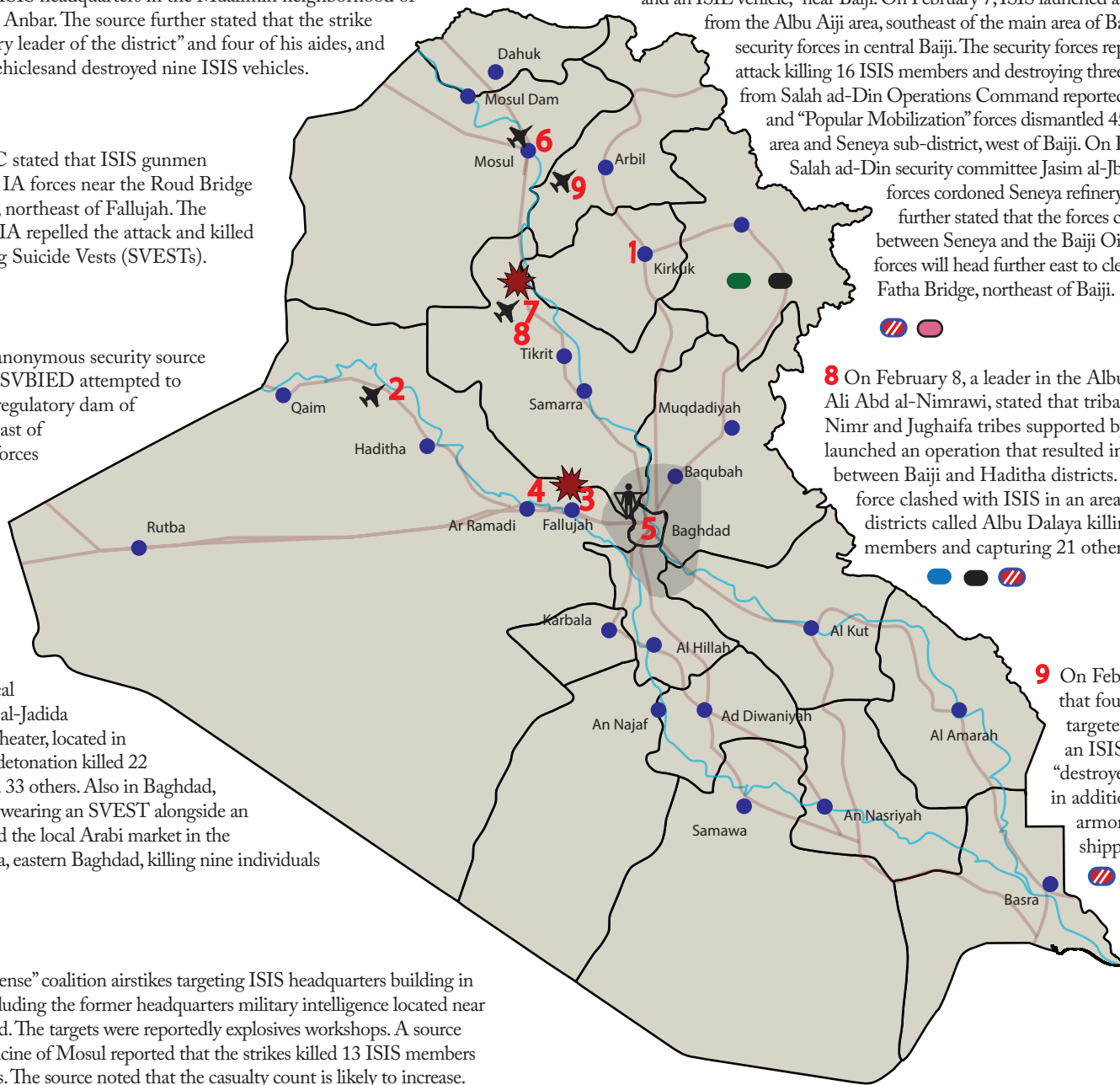


7 On February 6, a source from the Iraqi Police (IP) Command of Salah ad-Din reported that coalition airstrikes targeted ISIS in the Asri and Senai neighborhoods in the main area of Baiji district, in addition to Sikak area and Seneya sub-district, west of Baiji district. He added that the strikes killed "more than 40" ISIS member and destroyed 10 ISIS vehicles and eight ISIS homes. On February 7, DoD reported that coalition airstrikes targeted "large tactical unit" of ISIS and destroyed "two ISIL buildings and an ISIL vehicle," near Baiji. On February 7, ISIS launched an attack originating from the Albu Aiji area, southeast of the main area of Baiji district, targeting security forces in central Baiji. The security forces reportedly repelled the attack killing 16 ISIS members and destroying three vehicles. Also, a source from Salah ad-Din Operations Command reported that Iraqi Army (IA) and "Popular Mobilization" forces dismantled 45 IEDs in the Sikak area and Seneya sub-district, west of Baiji. On February 8, chairman of Salah ad-Din security committee Jasim al-Jbara stated that security forces cordoned Seneya refinery and Seneya camp. He further stated that the forces cleared the Sahil area, between Seneya and the Baiji Oil Refinery, and that the forces will head further east to clear the area near the Fatha Bridge, northeast of Baiji.

8 On February 8, a leader in the Albu Nimr tribe, Sheikh Ali Abd al-Nimrawi, stated that tribal fighters from Albu Nimr and Jughaifa tribes supported by coalition air cover launched an operation that resulted in clearing the road between Baiji and Haditha districts. He added that the force clashed with ISIS in an area in between the districts called Albu Dalaya killing "dozens" of ISIS members and capturing 21 others.



9 On February 7, DoD reported that four coalition airstrikes targeted two staging areas and an ISIS tactical unit and "destroyed 28 vehicles of ISIS in addition to three ISIS armored vehicles and a shipping container."



100km

- Major Cities
- ✖ Major Clash
- ✈ Armed Drones

- ✈ Airstrikes
- 👤 SVEST
- 👤 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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The contest for the main area of Baiji district and its western environs has escalated. It appears that the ISF and Iraqi Shi'a militias have designated Baiji once again as a main effort. The area was cleared of ISIS in mid-November 2014 but ISIS was able to regain parts of the main area of the district in mid-December of the same year. The ISF and the militias maintained a presence in the area but did not launch a wide operation to clear it, likely prioritizing clearing the environs of Dhuluiya and Balad in late December and northern Diyala in late January 2015. The prioritization of one area at a time has been the signature of the ISF and Iranian-backed Iraqi Shi'a militia counter-offensive against ISIS that started with the clearing of Jurf al-Sakhar in northern Babil in September 2014. This model has been implemented in all successful operations against ISIS, except in Anbar where the militias are not fully engaged. It is important to watch for a surprise shift in this strategy, in particular if the combined ISF/militia forces launch an operation originating from southern Kirkuk towards Hawija, located southwest of Kirkuk City and northeast of Baiji. This could force ISIS to reserve its manpower in Hawija to defend the area instead of deploying forces to prevent the ISF and militias from retaking Baiji. A signal of this may be the February 8 visit by the leader of Badr Organization, Hadi al-Ameri, to a "Popular Mobilization" training camp in Taza, south of Kirkuk City, and his meeting with the governor of Kirkuk, Najm al-Din Karim. During the visit, Ameri stated that he aims to hold his next press conference in Hawija and that the plan to clear ISIS from southwestern Kirkuk was "finished." Moving south, ISIS has escalated its attacks against the capital in a likely effort to portray the ISF and the government as unable to protect Baghdad, following the recent decision by PM Abadi to lift the night curfew and open new roads.