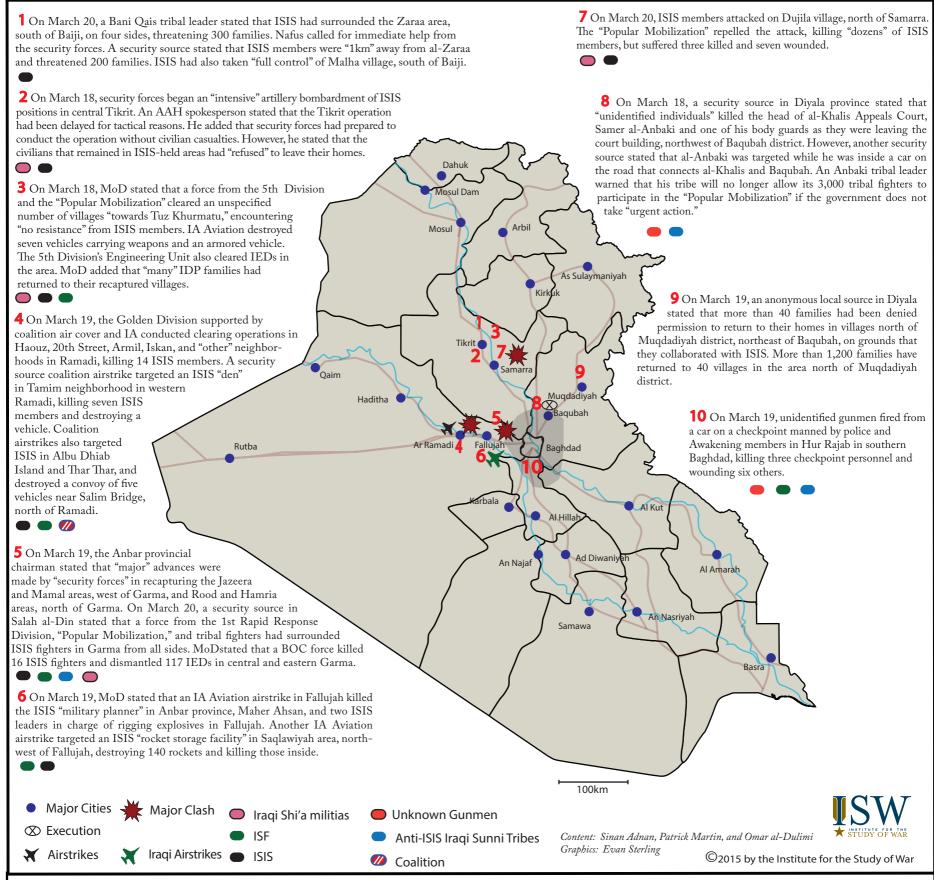
Iraq Situation Report: March 18-20, 2015



Iraqi Security Forces and Iraqi Shi'a militias have begun to shell Tikrit. Shelling may disrupt ISIS within the city, making further advances to clear ISIS possible. Shelling will also likely inflict civilian casualties, which may have divisive consequences. Shelling alone will not destroy ISIS in Tikrit, nor remove its control of the city. The ISF shelled Fallujah heavily in the early months of 2014, and ISIS still remains in control of the town. ISIS attacked north and south of Tikrit on March 20, likely attempting to make gains or divert attention from ongoing operations in Tikrit. The ISIS attacks north of Tikrit were more substantial, with ISIS reportedly gaining control of new villages west of the river and immediately south of Baiji. These ISIS positions may allow ISIS to remain active in Salah ad-Din while the battle for Tikrit unfolds, possibly renewing attacks upon Baiji from the western desert. Meanwhile, in Anbar province, elements of the Iraqi Security Forces, Shi'a militias, and the "Popular Mobilization" attacked ISIS in Ramadi and north of Fallujah. The reporting about these operations suggest new gains by the ISF, but not definitive outcomes to clear ISIS from them. Both ISIS and anti-ISIS forces are active in Salah ad-Din and Anbar simultaneously.