

Iraq Situation Report: March 5-6, 2015

1 On March 5, a joint force consisting of Anbar Operations Command (AOC), Baghdad Operations Command (BOC), and “tribal fighters” supported by IA Aviation launched an operation to clear eastern Garma, northeast of Fallujah. On March 6, a security source in Anbar province stated that a force from the IA was clearing houses in the Garma area when a Home-Borne IED (HBIED) detonated as the force entered the house. Five soldiers were killed and four were injured. On March 6, Military Intelligence launched an attack using “Multiple Launch Rocket Systems” (MLRS) targeting ISIS “hideouts” in Garma, killing 13 ISIS members and destroying two Humvees and six vehicles outfitted with heavy machine guns. A source from BOC stated that the initial stages of the operation resulted in the death of 34 ISIS fighters, dismantling 100 IEDs and 22 IEDs rigged to homes, and destroying five vehicles outfitted with heavy machine guns. On March 6, DoD reported that a coalition airstrike “near Fallujah” struck an ISIS tactical unit and a headquarters, destroying two ISIS buildings and a vehicle.

2 On March 5, “security forces” and “Popular Mobilization” successfully entered the al-Askari area in Dour. Also, combined forces cleared the village and farmland of former Saddam Hussein era vice president Izzat al-Douri, northeast of Dour. On March 6, Federal Police (FP) forces and the “Popular Mobilization” reportedly cordoned Dour while IA Aviation attacked targets inside the area. Combined forces blocked the road between Dour and Alam and entered Dour from the north, initiating intense clashes with ISIS reaching central Dour. A source from the Joint Operations Command and a “local” source from Salah ad-Din stated that the combined forces “liberated” Dour. These forces began to dismantle IEDs in the area and established an alternate route to avoid the IEDs emplaced on the main road.

3 On March 6, a leader of Iraqi Sunni tribal fighters in Salah ad-Din, Khalid al-Jbara, stated that the combined forces entered Dour airport while a later report indicated that these forces seized the entire airport following clashes with ISIS.

4 On March 6, a source from the FP stated that combined forces cordoned Alam and Albu Ajil and that IA Aviation was launching strikes inside the areas. The source added that four FP battalions deployed from Baghdad to participate in Salah ad-Din operations. Also, an MoI spokesperson stated that the interior minister arrived in the area and expressed the likelihood of “storming” Alam the following day if surrounding areas are cleared.

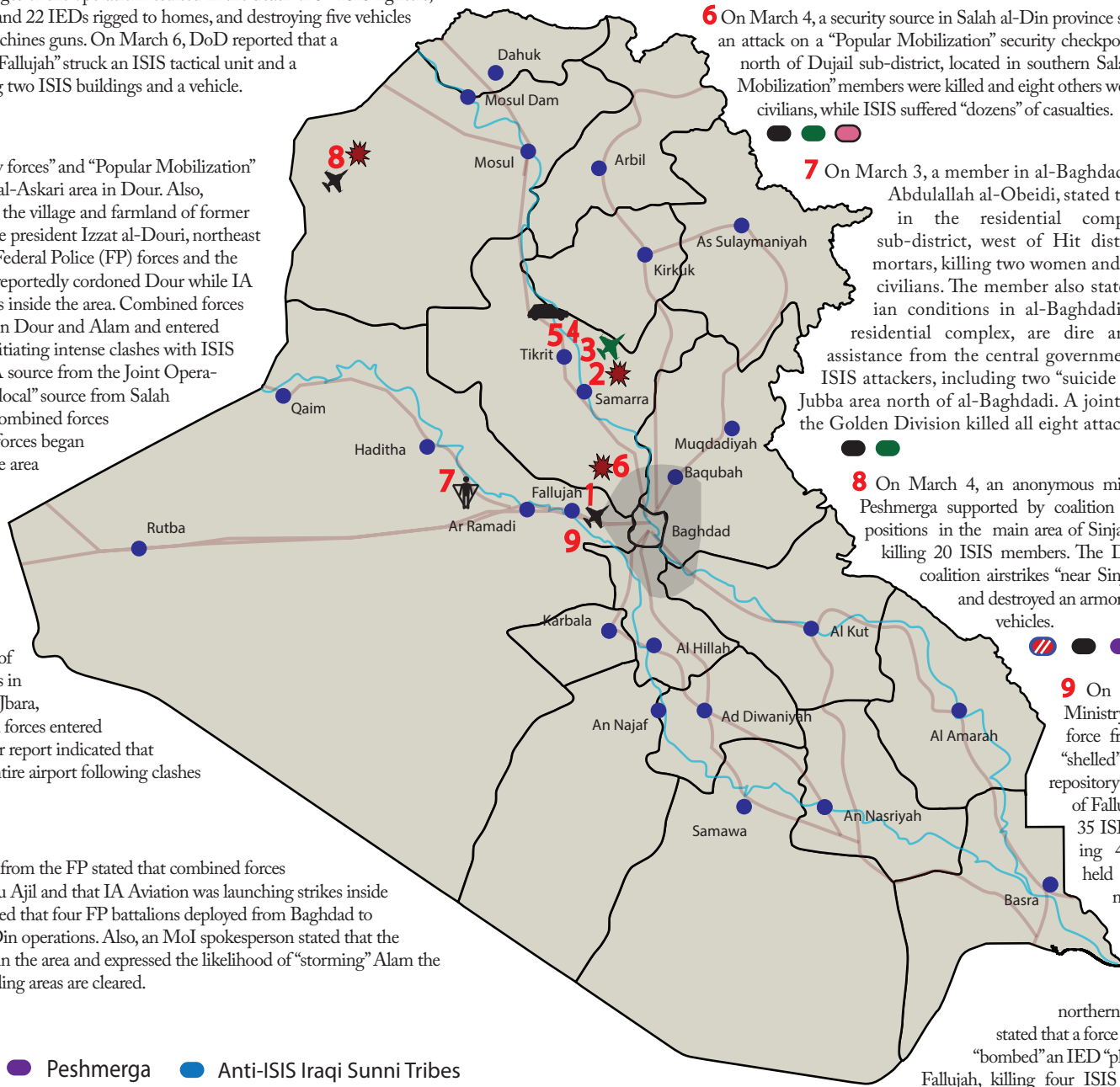
5 On March 5, ISIS attacked a gathering of “security forces” in al-Mabidi village with eight SVBIEDs; however, “security forces” killed four of the attackers and destroyed their vehicles before they reached their target. Also, ISIS attackers used three SVBIEDs to target security forces in Tel Gisiba area, east of Tikrit on the Tikrit-Kirkuk highway, killing four security forces members and wounding 28 others. A joint force consisting of IA, IP, “Popular Mobilization,” and tribal fighters reportedly surrounded ISIS in Ajil Oil Field and later seized the area although ISIS set fire to the oil wells.

6 On March 4, a security source in Salah al-Din province stated that ISIS launched an attack on a “Popular Mobilization” security checkpoint in al-Samelat village, north of Dujail sub-district, located in southern Salah al-Din. Five “Popular Mobilization” members were killed and eight others were injured, including two civilians, while ISIS suffered “dozens” of casualties.

7 On March 3, a member in al-Baghdadi Local Council, Najm Abdullah al-Obeidi, stated that ISIS shelled houses in the residential complex in al-Baghdadi sub-district, west of Hit district, with rockets and mortars, killing two women and a child and injuring 10 civilians. The member also stated that the humanitarian conditions in al-Baghdadi, especially inside the residential complex, are dire and require immediate assistance from the central government. On March 5, eight ISIS attackers, including two “suicide bombers,” attacked the Jubba area north of al-Baghdadi. A joint force from the IA and the Golden Division killed all eight attackers.

8 On March 4, an anonymous military source stated that Peshmerga supported by coalition airstrikes attacked ISIS positions in the main area of Sinjar district, west of Mosul, killing 20 ISIS members. The DoD reported that three coalition airstrikes “near Sinjar” struck a tactical unit and destroyed an armored vehicle and three ISIS vehicles.

9 On March 4, The Defense Ministry (MoD) stated that a force from military intelligence “shelled” an ISIS “missile repository” in al-Rushiya area, south of Fallujah near the dam, killing 35 ISIS members and destroying 40 “U.S.-made” missiles held by ISIS. A force from military intelligence also reportedly destroyed a training camp near the Tewfik Mosque in the al-Jughaifi area in northern Fallujah. MoD also stated that a force from military intelligence “bombed” an IED “plant” on al-Ayada street in Fallujah, killing four ISIS members and an ISIS “official” responsible for “booby-traps.”



- Major Cities
- Peshmerga
- Anti-ISIS Iraqi Sunni Tribes
- ★ Major Clash
- ⚡ Coalition
- Iraqi Shi'a militias
- 🚗 SVBIED
- ISF
- ✈️ Airstrikes
- ISIS
- 🚁 SVEST
- ✈️ Iraqi Airstrikes



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

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The operation to retake Tikrit continued today, although Tikrit city itself does not appear to be the immediate priority for the combined forces. Since the start of the ground operation on March 2, the the eastern and southern axes have been the primary focus. The forces that moved from Diyala and from Samarra have been moving steadily and clearing smaller villages and areas on their way to Alam, northeast of Tikrit, and toward Dour, southeast of Tikrit. Dour and Alam represent the largest areas of ISIS concentration east of Tikrit where combat operations are concentrated for now. If the combined forces take control of these areas, then they will likely use them as staging areas to advance west toward Tikrit city. An assault from the east will likely be accompanied by a ground assault from the direction of Camp Speicher, where forces have not yet fully engaged. The Tikrit operation is not the only operation launched against ISIS strongholds in Iraq. Other forces from Anbar Operations Command (AOC), Baghdad Operations Command (BOC), Shi'a militias, and reportedly tribal fighters, initiated a military operation targeting the outskirts of Garma, a hub for anti-government armed groups including ISIS. Garma's geographic proximity to Fallujah and the northern and western Baghdad belts makes it an initial defensive position on the way to Fallujah, a launch-pad for attacks on the ISF and militias near Baghdad, and likely a transit zone for anti-government groups to shift resources. ISF and militias have thus been deployed around Garma since the fall of Fallujah in January 2014 and have launched multiple operations to clear it. The fact that the ISF, militias, and anti-ISIS Sunni fighters launched two concurrent operations against separate ISIS strongholds is significant. This is a deviation from previous anti-ISIS operations that prioritized one area at a time. Nevertheless, the operation near Garma does not appear to be as significant in size as operations around Tikrit.