

Iraq Situation Report: March 7-8, 2015

1 On March 7, an anonymous source stated that 30 gunmen in black military attire with modern vehicles stormed an unspecified number of homes in Sadr City and kidnapped 32 individuals. The Interior Ministry stated that unidentified gunmen kidnapped 17 individuals from Sadr City without providing further details. Later, Hakim al-Zamili, chairman of the Security and Defense Committee of the Council of Representatives and leader in the Sadrist Trend, stated that the kidnapped individuals “were freed” and that the vehicles used in the incident “were identified” without providing more specifics. He added that the incident was intended to “harm the reputation” of the Sadrist Trend and called for Baghdad Operations Command (BOC) to enforce strict security measures at checkpoints and to investigate the incident.

2 On March 8, a source from the Interior Ministry stated that a VBIED detonated in the Jamila area, eastern Baghdad, killing three individuals and injuring nine others. A conflicting report indicated that a VBIED in the same area underwent controlled detonation without causing casualties.

3 On March 7, spokesperson of Salah ad-Din tribal council Sheikh Marwan al-Jbara stated that forces from Dijla Operations Command (DOC), Samarra Operations Command (SOC), Salah ad-Din Operations Command (SDOC), “Popular Mobilization,” tribal fighters from the province and the Omayya al-Jbara Battalion (OJB), and Iraqi Police from Alam, supported by IA Aviation, launched an operation from four axes to retake Alam. On March 8, the forces reportedly surrounded the central area of Alam. IA Aviation targeted ISIS near Alam, killing 11 ISIS members and destroying two VBIEDs. Also, a source from the Joint Operations Command (JOC) stated that the forces had blocked the road between Alam and Tikrit, along with other areas across the Tigris. He reported that the forces will storm Alam from the south.

4 On March 8, the Interior Ministry stated that forces from the Federal Police (FP) and from the Security and Safety Directorate of the Ministry deployed from Camp Falcon, south of Baghdad, to participate in the ongoing operations in Salah ad-Din. The statement did not specify the size of the force. Meanwhile, a VBIED detonated targeting an FP checkpoint near a local market, south of Baghdad, killing and injuring an unspecified number of individuals.

5 On March 7, combined security forces started to “storm” the Albu Ajil area, southeast of Tikrit. On March 8, combined forces assaulted “parts” of Albu Ajil villages and killed 15 ISIS members. Later, spokesperson of Badr Organization Badr Ahmed denied an earlier report indicating that the Albu Ajil area had been captured. He stated that joint forces took control of 80% of Albu Ajil but that the “center” remains under ISIS control.

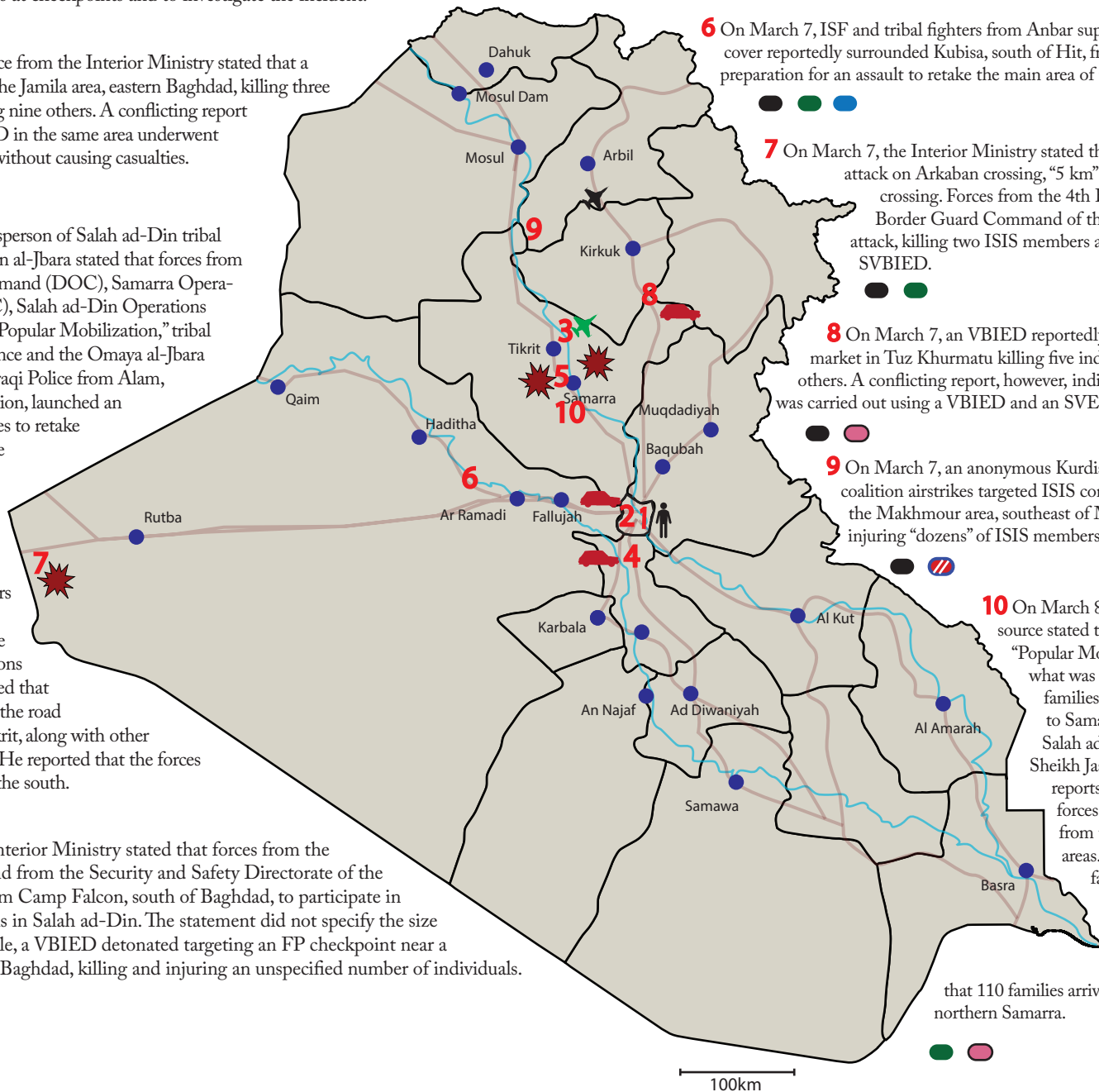
6 On March 7, ISF and tribal fighters from Anbar supported by coalition air cover reportedly surrounded Kubisa, south of Hit, from four axes in preparation for an assault to retake the main area of the sub-district.

7 On March 7, the Interior Ministry stated that ISIS launched an attack on Arkaban crossing, “5 km” away from Trebil crossing. Forces from the 4th Brigade under the Border Guard Command of the 2nd Area repelled the attack, killing two ISIS members and destroying an SVBIED.

8 On March 7, an VBIED reportedly targeted a local market in Tuz Khurmatu killing five individuals and injuring 25 others. A conflicting report, however, indicated that the attack was carried out using a VBIED and an SVEST.

9 On March 7, an anonymous Kurdish source stated that coalition airstrikes targeted ISIS convoys and positions in the Makhmour area, southeast of Mosul, killing and injuring “dozens” of ISIS members.

10 On March 8, an anonymous security source stated that “security forces” and “Popular Mobilization” transported what was reported as dozens of families from Dour and Alam to Samarra. Also, chairman of Salah ad-Din tribal council Sheikh Jasim al-Jbara denied reports indicating that security forces had kidnapped families from the Albu Ajil and Dour areas. He explained that the families were “evacuated” to refugee camps. Also, an anonymous source from the Red Crescent stated that 110 families arrived a refugee camp in northern Samarra.



- Major Cities
- ★ Major Clash
- ✈ Iraqi Airstrikes
- 👤 Kidnapping
- ✈ Airstrikes
- 🚗 VBIED
- 🚩 Coalition
- ISF
- ISIS
- Anti-ISIS Iraqi Sunni Tribes
- Iraqi Shi'a militias



Content: Sinan Adnan
Graphics: John Sauerhoff

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The battle for Tikrit city is likely nearing. Combined forces from the ISF, Iraqi Shi'a militias, and Iraqi Sunni tribal fighters from Salah ad-Din Province have been making gains on the eastern front where the majority of military operations have taken place so far. Control over villages, urban centers, and supply routes in the east will allow the combined forces to stage an assault from the east toward Tikrit City across the river. These recent advances have most likely caused a major disruption to ISIS supply lines to and from Tikrit, especially towards Baiji and other areas under ISIS control in northern Iraq. ISIS has likely been reinforcing its defenses in the city and forces on the eastern front have moved into the city as anti-ISIS forces advance, which will likely prolong the fighting in the city. The kidnapping incident in Baghdad is of high significance mainly because of its location. Sadr City is a stronghold for the Sadrist Trend of Moqtada al-Sadr and his militia, the Peace Brigades, which were previously known as the Jaysh al-Mahdi. Recently, Sadr has been increasingly portraying himself and the Peace Brigades as nationalists and taking an aggressive stance toward other Iraqi Shi'a militias, likely to solidify his reputation as a national figure with broader appeal. This stance has likely angered other militias that also operate in Baghdad. This incident was therefore likely an artifact of intra-Shi'a militia rivalries. Although clashes have previously taken place between the Sadrists and their rivals, Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq (AAH) in Baghdad, they were quickly contained. It will be important to watch for such incidents, especially if they destabilize the security situation in the capital at this critical time.