

# Iraq Situation Report: April 16-17, 2015

**1** A Peshmerga source stated that ISIS launched an attack on a Peshmerga position near the Tel Saqf area, north of Mosul, using two Vehicle Borne IEDs (VBIEDs) followed by an attack by an unspecified number of “suicide attackers.” However, Peshmerga forces foiled the attack, killing two “suicide attackers” before they could reach their target. ● ●

**2** On April 17, a tribal leader of the Albu Nimr tribe, Naim al-Gaood, stated that an SVBIED targeted the convoy of the commander of the 7th IA Division, Maj. Gen. Numan Abd al-Zobaie, in the outskirts of al-Baghdadi, west of Hit, injuring the commander and three of his body guards. ● ●

**3** The chairman of the Anbar provincial council stated that a senior delegation went to the Joint Operations Command (JOC) to demand an increase in airstrikes and military supplies. The chairman separately stated that two battalions from the Emergency Response Division, previously the Emergency Response Brigades, deployed to Ramadi. On April 17, the deputy commander of the Golden Division stated that Ramadi was under government control but that more reinforcement was needed for decisive action. Later, however, a source within Anbar Operations Command warned of the possible fall of the city, stating that ISIS launched an attack on central Ramadi and captured the Grand Ramadi Mosque, the Sunni Endowment Office, and the Sharika Neighborhood, coming close to capturing the Government Complex. An hour later, security forces reportedly recaptured the mosque but were attacked by an SVBIED. Following these developments, PM Abadi ordered the urgent deployment of additional forces to Anbar through the JOC. Rafi Abdul-Karim al-Fahdawi, a leader of Albu Fahad tribe, later stated that unspecified anti-ISIS Anbari tribes authorized the PM to approve “Popular Mobilization” participation in Anbar. This statement contradicts a prior report of “Popular Mobilization” deployment east of Ramadi, and the status of such participation remains unclear. Fahdawi also stated that two FP battalions arrived in Ramadi as reinforcements. ● ● ●

**4** On April 15, a VBIED targeted the home of the Electricity Minister in Sofiya, east of Ramadi, killing his aide. On April 16, unconfirmed reports stated that 3,000 “Popular Mobilization” members arrived in Sijariya, east of Ramadi. Also, a source at Habaniya base stated that “large numbers” of IA and “Popular Mobilization” arrived at the base, and that an unspecified number of IA units withdrew from Albu Faraj and Sijariya to Habaniya base due to a lack of ammunition and supplies. These reports are unconfirmed, but the deputy commander of the Golden Division stated that such claims have hurt morale, contributing to the deteriorating situation east of Ramadi. As a result of the ongoing fighting, areas nearby Ramadi witnessed an exodus toward Baghdad. An official stated that “more than 1,000” families fled and are waiting to be permitted into Baghdad. On April 17, Baghdad Operations Command (BOC) stated that it is “facilitating” the entrance of 18,00 families to Baghdad. ● ● ●

**5** On April 17, a security source in Arbil stated that a Suicide Vehicle-Borne IED (SVBIED) targeted the American Consulate in Ainkawa area, north of Arbil and southeast of Arbil International Airport. Peshmerga forces guarding the building repelled the attack by destroying the SVBIED before it reached the target, although two individuals were killed and eight others were injured ● ● ●

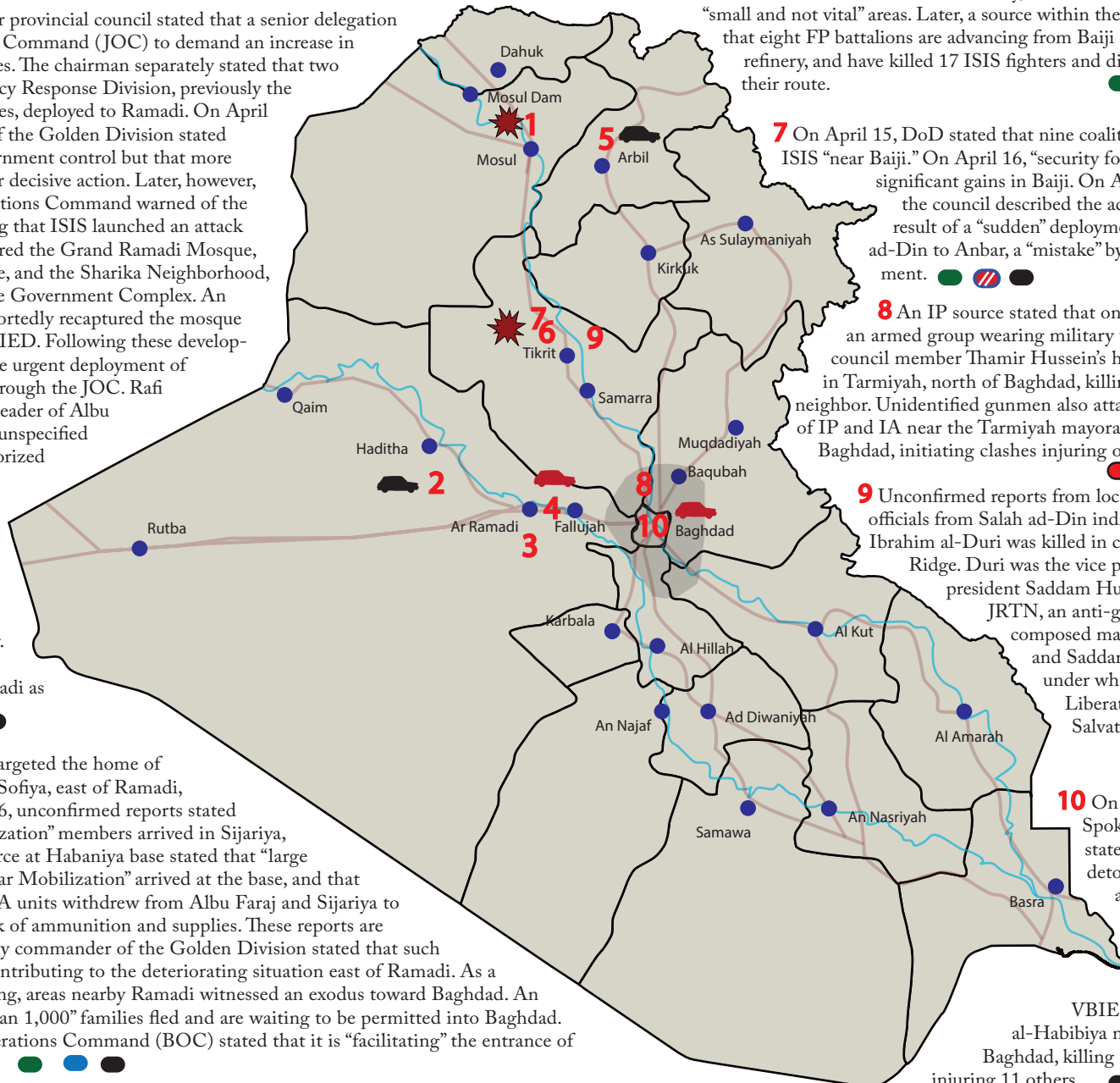
**6** On April 17, ISIS launched a dawn attack from within the Baiji refinery against security forces in the area. A statement from a CTS spokesperson stated that CTS forces have control over vital areas of the facility, while ISIS fighters are present in “small and not vital” areas. Later, a source within the FP command stated that eight FP battalions are advancing from Baiji district toward the refinery, and have killed 17 ISIS fighters and dismantled 400 IEDs on their route. ● ●

**7** On April 15, DoD stated that nine coalition airstrikes targeted ISIS “near Baiji.” On April 16, “security forces” reportedly made significant gains in Baiji. On April 16, the chairman of the council described the advance of ISIS as the result of a “sudden” deployment of forces from Salah ad-Din to Anbar, a “mistake” by MoD and the Government. ● ● ●

**8** An IP source stated that on the evening of April 15 an armed group wearing military uniforms attacked local council member Thamir Hussein’s home in the Farouk area in Tarmiyah, north of Baghdad, killing the official and a neighbor. Unidentified gunmen also attacked a security patrol of IP and IA near the Tarmiyah mayoral building, north of Baghdad, initiating clashes injuring one IP member. ●

**9** Unconfirmed reports from local government and ISF officials from Salah ad-Din indicated that Izzat Ibrahim al-Duri was killed in clashes near the Hamrin Ridge. Duri was the vice president of deposed president Saddam Hussein and leader of JRTN, an anti-government armed group composed mainly of former Baathists and Saddam-era army members under what is known as the Jihad, Liberation, and National Salvation Front. ● ● ●

**10** On April 17, MoI Spokesperson Saad Maan stated that a VBIED detonated in 84th Street in al-Amal neighborhood, southwestern Baghdad, killing one and injuring 18 others. Another VBIED detonated in al-Habibiya neighborhood, in eastern Baghdad, killing three individuals and injuring 11 others. ●



- Major Cities
- Major Clash
- Coalition
- VBIED
- Peshmerga
- Anti-ISIS Iraqi Sunni Tribes
- ISIS
- SVBIED
- ISF
- Iraqi Shi'a militias
- Unknown Gunmen

Content: Sinan Adnan, Patrick Martin, and Omar al-Dulimi  
 Graphics: Evan Sterling



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The situation in Anbar has deteriorated over the last two days as ISIS made further gains around the city and launched an assault on the city center. Prime Minister Abadi is therefore faced with a difficult decision point regarding the deployment of the “Popular Mobilization” to Anbar province. The current status of the “Popular Mobilization” in Anbar is unclear, a likely indication that a decision regarding their participation has not been made. The ISF attempted to shift from other fronts to Anbar, likely to pressure ISIS, but this has resulted in the ISF stretching itself thin at a time when ISIS and likely other anti-government groups were poised to counter-attack to restore lost territory. Further attacks by ISIS remain possible against Tikrit, newly cleared areas in Diyala province, and other areas of Anbar such as Haditha and Baghdadi. Reports of the death of JRTN leader Izzat al-Duri remain unconfirmed. If he was, indeed, killed, his death would be important but not game-changing. JRTN and the Baathists in Iraq would likely be weakened and a leadership crisis could result. Two factions of the Baath party, that of Mohammed Younis al-Ahmed and that of Abdul-Baqir al-Sadun could attempt to take charge of the party in way that leads to fragmentation. It is also possible, however, that Duri’s death could unite these factions as they were in direct tension with the possibly deceased leader.