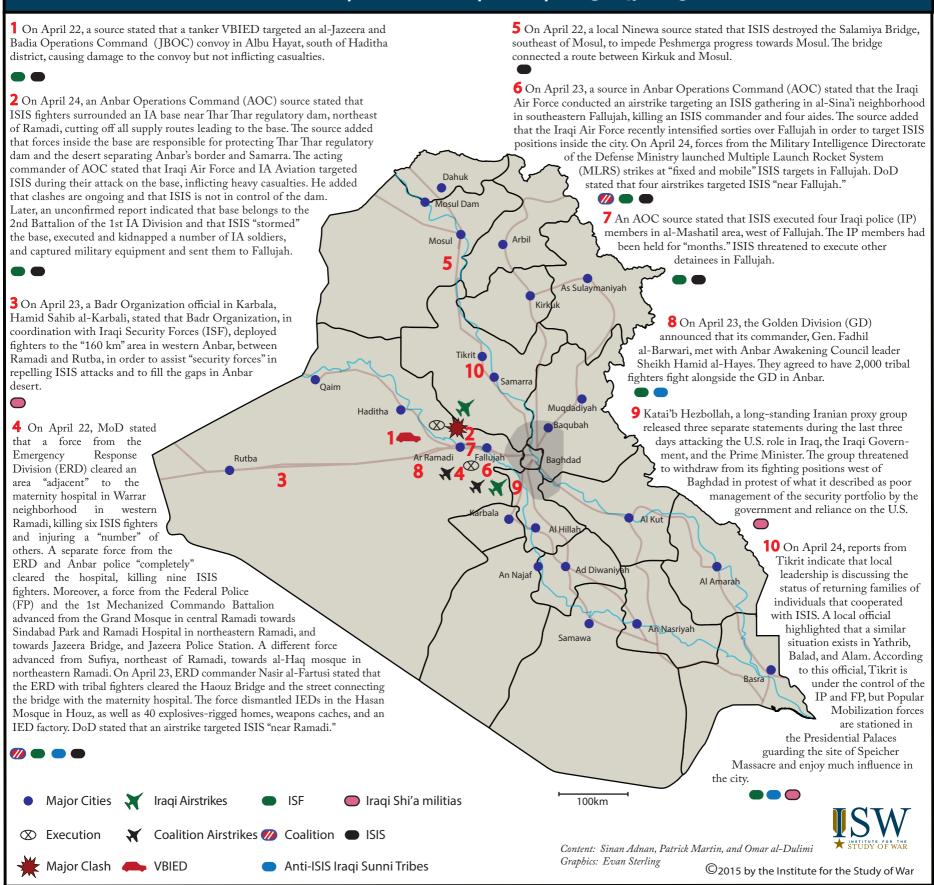
Iraq Situation Report: April 23-24, 2015



As expected, the recent Iraqi-American cooperation that sidelined Iranian-backed Iraqi Shi'a militias has generated a push back from Iranian allies in Iraq. The statements from long-standing Iranian proxy, Kata'ib Hezbollah are likely indicative of a growing rejection by the militias of U.S. involvement and cooperation with the government of PM Abadi. The leader of another proxy group known as al-Nujaba Movement rejected the notion that his group was commanded by the state-run "Popular Mobilization" instead highlighting that Nujaba commands two "brigades" in the Popular Mobilization. Proxy groups are not the only groups emphasizing their own control over armed forces. A senior figure in the Sadrist Trend of Moqtada al-Sadr recently stated that the armed wing of the Trend is commanded by Sadr rather than PM Abadi. This comes following a recent success by the Iraqi Government in curbing two ISIS advances in northern and western Iraq with support from the U.S.-led coalition and a diminishing role for the militias. If the militias continue to be sidelined, tension will likely increase and it will be important to watch for rhetorical opposition becoming physical. Meanwhile in Ramadi, ISOF and specialty elements from the Interior Ministry are working to roll back ISIS gains in southern Ramadi, a task that will likely be complicated and time consuming given ISIS's entrenched position in these neighborhoods.