

# Iraq Situation Report: April 4-6, 2015

**1** On April 6, the IP commander in Baiji, colonel Saad al-Nufus stated that ISIS launched an “intense” attack on Mazraa village, south of Baiji. However, “security forces”, tribal fighters, and “Popular Mobilization” foiled the attack, killing 13 ISIS members. The Baiji local chairman also stated that ISIS attacked security forces and the “Popular Mobilization” in Faisal al-Zamili area, previously known as al-Malha, south of Baiji. The attack was repelled, resulting in “50” ISIS members killed.

**2** On April 6, a security source in Anbar stated that ISIS launched an SVBIED attack on a company headquarters of the Border Guards near the Iraqi-Saudi border. The Border Guards destroyed the SVBIED before it was able to reach its target. The source added that ISIS launched an attack after the SVBIED was destroyed but Border Guards repelled the attack, killing “several” ISIS fighters.

**3** On April 4, the Salah al-Din provincial chairman stated that the “Popular Mobilization” had withdrawn from Tikrit and that Federal and local Iraqi Police (IP) had taken charge of security. Also, Interior Minister Mohammed al-Ghaban stated that 13,000 MoI members in Salah ad-Din returned to their duties and that a committee was formed to prevent those who cooperated with ISIS from returning to duty. On April 6, “Popular Mobilization” spokesperson Ahmed al-Asadi stated that members of the “Popular Mobilization” would remain on the outskirts of Tikrit and in the Presidential Palaces because these areas contain the remains of those killed in the Speicher Massacre. He further stated that those members would not leave until all of the bodies were extracted and a memorial was erected for the dead.

**4** On April 5, MoD stated that Defense Minister Khalid al-Obeidi met with Anbar governor Suhaib al-Rawi and Planning Minister Salman al-Jumaili to discuss arming tribes in Anbar. On April 6, Vice President Osama al-Nujaifi stated that he met with Rawi to discuss support for local forces in Anbar. Leader of the Obeidi tribe in Anbar, Mal-Allah Barzan stated that the governor indicated that he had formal authorization from the Prime Minister and MoD to purchase light and medium weapons and equipment for tribal fighters and security forces in Anbar, adding that the central government allocated funds to Anbar to purchase the equipment.

**5** On April 4, a source in the Anbar Operations Command (AOC) stated that ISIS executed 14 individuals, four of which were IP members, in the al-Jazeera area, north of Ramadi, that were kidnapped “months” ago.

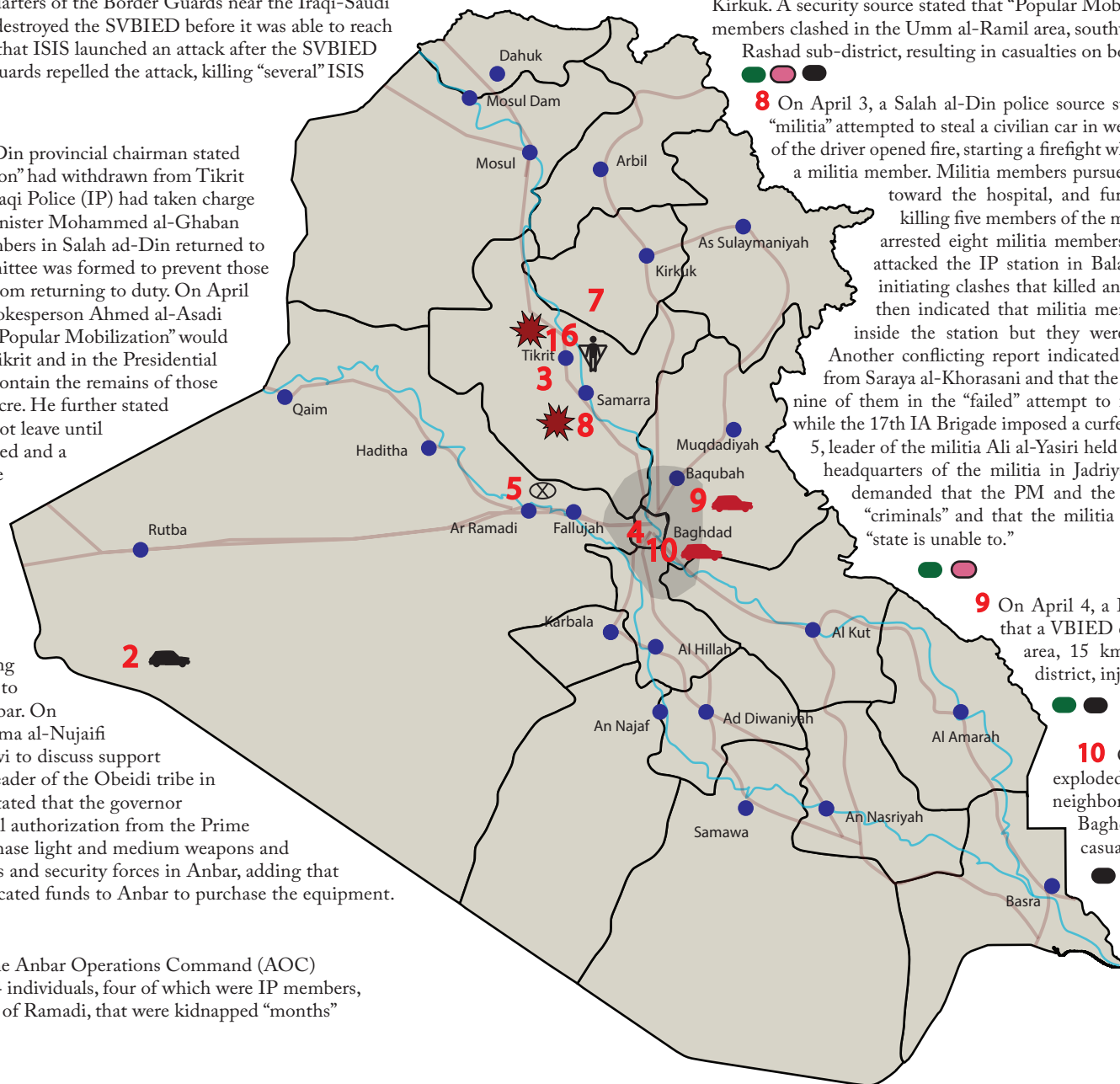
**6** On April 3 an attacker with an SVEST attempted to attack a restaurant in Alam, northeast of Tikrit but two Iraqi Police (IP) members stood in his way. The explosion killed one of the IP members and injured the other.

**7** On April 5, an anonymous source in the office of Badr Organization leader Hadi al-Amiri stated that Badr Organization members and the 5th IA Division began clearing operations in Riyadh sub-district, southwest of Kirkuk. A security source stated that “Popular Mobilization” and ISIS members clashed in the Umm al-Ramil area, southwest of Kirkuk near Rashad sub-district, resulting in casualties on both sides.

**8** On April 3, a Salah al-Din police source stated that members of a “militia” attempted to steal a civilian car in western Balad. The brother of the driver opened fire, starting a firefight which killed the driver and a militia member. Militia members pursued the vehicle as it drove toward the hospital, and further clashes took place killing five members of the militia. The IP arrived and arrested eight militia members. Militia members then attacked the IP station in Balad to free the prisoners, initiating clashes that killed an IP member. One report then indicated that militia men held two IP members inside the station but they were released shortly after. Another conflicting report indicated that the attackers were from Saraya al-Khorasani and that the IP arrested 29 and killed nine of them in the “failed” attempt to free the militia prisoner while the 17th IA Brigade imposed a curfew on the area. On April 5, leader of the militia Ali al-Yasiri held a press conference at the headquarters of the militia in Jadriya, central Baghdad, and demanded that the PM and the government punish the “criminals” and that the militia “can arrest” them if the “state is unable to.”

**9** On April 4, a Diyala IP source stated that a VBIED detonated in the Kanan area, 15 km southeast of Baquba district, injuring two IP members.

**10** On April 6, a VBIED exploded in an alley of Daudi neighborhood in central Baghdad, resulting in no casualties.



- Major Cities
- ⊗ Execution
- Iraqi Shi'a militias
- ISIS
- SVBIED
- ★ Major Clash
- ISF
- VBIED
- ⚡ SVEST
- Anti-ISIS Iraqi Sunni Tribes

Content: Sinan Adnan and Patrick Martin  
Graphics: Evan Sterling



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The contest to reverse ISIS’s territorial gains in Iraq is escalating. The recent success achieved by the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and allied forces in Tikrit has set a decision point for the government, the U.S.-led coalition, and Iranian-backed militias regarding the next objective in the fight against ISIS. All sides agree on the need to dislodge ISIS from all Iraqi territories, but the sequence in which this goal should be accomplished varies. A U.S. official expressed the desire to move north, toward Mosul, although developments on the ground appear to be moving in a different direction. Defense Minister Khalid al-Obeidi hinted that an operation towards Anbar is nearing, although he refused to provide a specific timeline. The statement came following a meeting with the Governor of Anbar, Suhaib al-Rawi, in which the former indicated that both sides agreed on a mechanism to arm Anbari tribes to assist the ISF. Although Anbar has preexisting military and human terrain that can facilitate the launch of wide operations, the province has vast desert areas ISIS has used extensively to facilitate its operations and to train its fighters prior to the fall of Fallujah in early 2014 and further Anbari districts in the summer offensive of June 2014. ISIS experience in the Anbari desert and its likely ability to enforce its ranks in Anbar by deploying military assets from Syria would pose further challenges to the ISF. The role of the Iranian-backed militias is uncertain in such an operation, but the militias are unlikely to stand idle as operations continue. If, as in Tikrit, a situation unfolds whereby Iranian-backed militias do not participate, then the government will likely work with other Iraqi Shi’a armed groups similar to those that participated in the Tikrit operation. Meanwhile, the unrest caused by Saraya al-Khorasani in Balad sheds light on the negative role Iranian-backed militias can play in areas with relative stability after an existential ISIS threat is deterred.