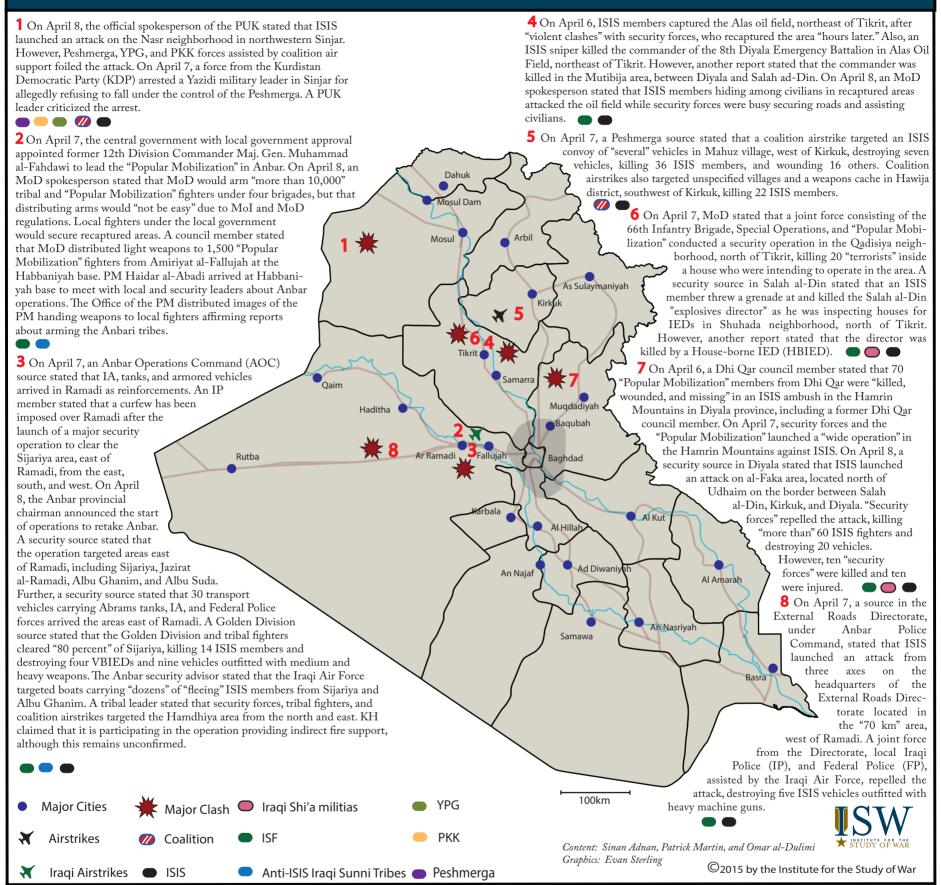
Iraq Situation Report: April 7-8, 2015



The Government of PM Abadi and the local Anbari Government are embarking on a major undertaking to recapture areas of Anbar Province that fell out of government control in early 2014. Despite media reports indicating that the operations in Anbar were launched in all of the province, reports of kinetic engagements and statements from local tribal leaders indicate otherwise. Nevertheless, the initiation of a government effort to provide further arms to Anbari tribes and the appointment of a military leader for the Anbaris indicate the seriousness of the government in pursuing its next objective, and that major operations are likely nearing. ISIS controls six out of eight districts centers across Anbar and heavily contests the provincial capital, Ramadi. Therefore, the timeline for Anbar operations is most likely to be much longer than the other anti-ISIS operations that have been launched since June of 2014. Given the vast extent of areas to be recaptured, the operations will also require much more manpower. Therefore, the support and arming of local tribes will play a crucial role. In other provinces, anti-ISIS Iraqi Sunni tribes have mostly played a minor role in operations to recapture territories from ISIS and other insurgent groups. In contrast, the strong tribal nature of Anbar as well as the history of the province as the birthplace of the anti-Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) "Awakening" in 2005 will likely provide for a larger tribal role in the upcoming operations. The tribal nature of the area can at times pose an obstacle, as various tribes pursue their own interests. This can be seen in reports that emerged yesterday of intra-tribal conflict between the Dulaim and Albu Fahad tribes over leadership of the Anbari anti-ISIS efforts. Tribal dynamics will thus play an important role as the situation unfolds. There are no clear signs regarding the future role of Iranian-backed militias in Anbar operations. The claim from KH regarding its participation in Sijariya is not representative of the other militias as this i