

Iraq Situation Report: January 7 - 11, 2016

1 Conflicting reports of clashing at camp with Turkish forces near Mosul. The Ministry of Peshmerga reported on January 7 that two Turkish soldiers were killed by ISIS mortar fire on the Zaylkan Camp northeast of Mosul. Local Sunni fighters trained by Turkish advisers and Turkish forces responded by shelling ISIS targets north of Mosul. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan stated that ISIS's attack justified Turkey's troop presence. However, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and the JOC denied on January 8 that an attack had occurred, likely to deny that Turkey any legitimate reason to keep their forces at the base. ● ● ●

8 U.S. denies ongoing raids near Hawija. CoR Speaker Salim al-Jubouri stated on January 8 that raids similar to the joint U.S.-Kurdish raid in October 2015 on Hawija occurred "from time to time" and are "supported by Iraqi forces." He did not state anything regarding a U.S. role in such operations. However, U.S. Ambassador Stuart Jones denied on January 9 that any such raids occur in Hawija and Kirkuk and stated that reports claiming otherwise are untrue. 🚫

2 ISIS executes former security forces members. An anonymous source stated that ISIS executed 80 former security forces members on January 9 in Camp Ghazlani in southern Mosul on charges of spying. ISIS also executed eight former security forces members in Mosul on January 11. ●

9 Popular Mobilization force hit with friendly fire. An Iraqi drone struck fighters from the Popular Mobilization group Jund al-Imam in al-Salam village, southwest of Camp Speicher, killing nine and wounding 14 others. The airstrike occurred after the fighters requested support in response to an ISIS attack. Jund al-Imam and Iranian proxy militia AAH blamed the U.S. for the error and intentionally targeting the Popular Mobilization. ● ●

3 Indicators of a possible reconciliation within Kurdistan Regional Government. A senior Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) member stated on January 11 that an agreement had been reached whereby the majority Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) allowed the Speaker of Parliament from the rival Gorran party to return to Arbil in a temporary capacity to resume work until a permanent agreement is reached.

4 Heavy clashes continue near Haditha. ISIS attacked Barwana sub-district to the south on January 7. ISIS also targeted the ISF in Barwana with up to five Vehicle-borne IEDs (VBIEDs) on January 8, but the ISF destroyed the VBIEDs. The JOC stated that an airstrike wounded ISIS spokesperson Abu Muhammad al-Adnani on January 7 and killed a top ISIS commander on January 8 in Barwana. IA Aviation airstrikes repelled an attack on Barwana using an unspecified number of VBIEDs on January 9, and the ISF and tribal fighters recaptured Barwana and al-Sha'i areas on January 11. 🚫 ● ● ● ●

5 ISIS targets IA headquarters near Ramadi. A Suicide VBIED (SVBIED) targeted the headquarters of the 41st Brigade, 10th IA Division on January 7 in Albu Aitha northeast of Ramadi, but security forces killed the driver and safely detonated the car. ● ●

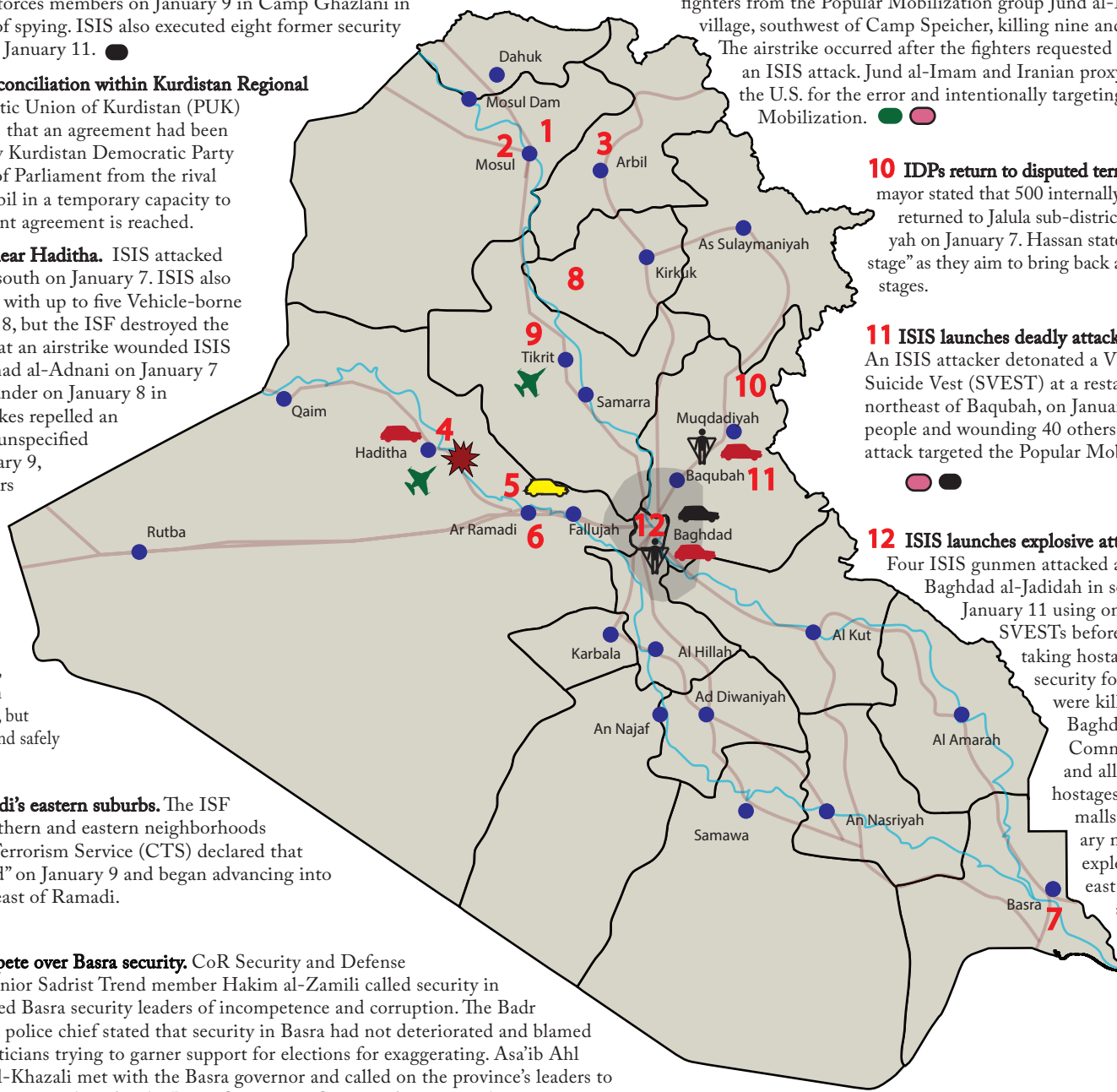
6 ISF begin clearing Ramadi's eastern suburbs. The ISF cleared central Ramadi's northern and eastern neighborhoods on January 7. The Counter-Terrorism Service (CTS) declared that Ramadi was "fully recaptured" on January 9 and began advancing into al-Sufiyah and al-Sijariyah, east of Ramadi. 🚫 ● ● ● ●

7 Shi'a political groups compete over Basra security. CoR Security and Defense Committee Chairman and senior Sadrist Trend member Hakim al-Zamili called security in Basra "unbearable" and accused Basra security leaders of incompetence and corruption. The Badr Organization-affiliated Basra police chief stated that security in Basra had not deteriorated and blamed foreign intervention and politicians trying to garner support for elections for exacerbating. Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq (AAH) leader Qais al-Khazali met with the Basra governor and called on the province's leaders to allow the Popular Mobilization to work under the Basra Operations Command to secure the province. ●

10 IDPs return to disputed territory. The Khanaqin mayor stated that 500 internally-displaced families returned to Jalula sub-district northeast of Muqadiyah on January 7. Hassan stated that this was "the fifth stage" as they aim to bring back all IDPs in following stages.

11 ISIS launches deadly attack in Diyala province. An ISIS attacker detonated a VBIED and then an Suicide Vest (SVEST) at a restaurant in Muqadiyah, northeast of Baqubah, on January 11, killing 20 people and wounding 40 others. ISIS claimed that the attack targeted the Popular Mobilization. ● ●

12 ISIS launches explosive attack on Baghdad mall. Four ISIS gunmen attacked al-Jawhirah Mall in Baghdad al-Jadidah in southeastern Baghdad on January 11 using one SVBIED and two SVESTs before firing on civilians and taking hostages. At least 30 civilians, security forces, and ISIS members were killed and wounded. Baghdad Operations Command secured the mall and allegedly freed most of the hostages while securing other malls nearby as a precautionary measure. A VBIED also exploded in Nahrwan area, east of Baghdad, wounding at least seven people. ● ●



- Major Cities
- Major Clash
- ✈️ Iraqi Airstrikes
- 🚗 SVBIED
- 🚚 VBIED
- 🚛 Failed S/VBIED
- 🚩 SVEST
- 👤 Volunteers
- 🇮🇶 ISF
- 🇹🇷 Turkey
- 🇺🇸 Coalition
- 🇮🇶 Anti-ISIS Iraqi Sunni Tribes
- 🇮🇶 Iraqi Shi'a Militias
- ISIS

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Rival Shi'a political factions are capitalizing on increased instability in Basra to compete for influence. The forward-deployment of Basra-based Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) to fight ISIS has led to a sharp increase in crime and violence between rival tribes in the province. Iraqi Shi'a militias, criminal gangs, and tribal fighters proliferated in Basra following the British withdrawal in 2007, but the ISF was able to secure the province in the past. The forward deployment of the ISF to fight ISIS, however, has allowed crime and violence to escalate unchecked. Competing Shi'a parties are using the deteriorating security situation in Basra to advance their political agendas. Hakim al-Zamili, Council of Representatives (CoR) Security and Defense Committee Chairman and a senior member of the Sadrist Trend, accused the police chief, a member of the rival Iranian-backed Badr Organization, of incompetence. Qais al-Khazali, the leader of Iranian proxy militia Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq (AAH), presided over the opening of a new AAH headquarters in Basra while calling for the Popular Mobilization to secure the province. Deployment of the Popular Mobilization would allow Iranian proxy militias to vastly extend their control over the resource-rich province and competing armed groups to expand operations, which would almost certainly lead to violence between different militias. All Shi'a political groups view Basra as a priority area to secure access to both patronage and recruits for the various militias. Shi'a political groups could deploy an increased number of militias in response to deteriorating security in Basra, which would further destabilize the province.

ISIS continued to pressure the ISF across Iraq amid a rising sentiment of anti-interventionism. ISIS continued conducting heavy attacks against Haditha district in western Anbar, launching at least five VBIEDs against tribal fighters and the ISF. ISIS also launched a deadly attack in the predominantly Shi'a area of Baghdad al-Jadidah in southwestern Baghdad and in Muqadiyah in central Diyala province. The attacks demonstrate that ISIS maintains the capability to conduct explosive attacks in areas that have a heavy presence of security forces. They also show ISIS's intent on disrupting the progress of the ISF by forcing the ISF to commit troops to defend Baghdad, Diyala, and Anbar provinces instead of deploying forward. Turkish troops continue to operate at a training camp northeast of Mosul, ignoring orders from Baghdad to withdraw. Shi'a political forces and Iranian proxy militias also continued to condemn U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF) raids in Kirkuk province as a violation of Iraqi sovereignty, though the U.S. has denied that any such raids have occurred. The constant anti-intervention rhetoric from pro-Iranian actors opposed to the U.S.-led Coalition's role in Iraq limits Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi's freedom to accept increased support from the U.S. in the fight against ISIS.