

Iraq Situation Report: October 27 - November 2, 2015

1 ISIS executes civilians and former ISF members in Mosul. ISIS executed 30 people on charges of treason and providing information to the Iraqi government on October 27.

2 ISIS attempt to target Peshmerga positions with explosive attacks. PUK Peshmerga foiled an SVBIED attack in Awinat village and prevented four SVEST attackers from detonating their explosives in Hardan intersection areas in Rabiaa district, northwest of Mosul.

3 Clashes continue in Sinjar. ISIS attacked Peshmerga positions from several directions on October 27 in Sinjar district, west of Samarra. Clashing continued in the district amid Coalition airstrikes. Peshmerga reinforcements reportedly arrived to the Sinjar area on November 1. Peshmerga also foiled a SVBIED attack.

4 ISF progress north of Ramadi. ISF crossed the Albu Faraj Bridge, north of Ramadi, into central Ramadi on November 1. ISF also continued advancing towards Anbar Operations Command headquarters, north of Ramadi.

5 Anti-government Shi'a militia launches rockets at MEK on base in Baghdad. Mukhtar Army leader Wathiq al-Battat claimed responsibility for launching 15 rockets at Mujahidin-e-Khalq (MEK) members at the Camp Liberty on October 29 near Baghdad International Airport.

6 Heavy rains cause humanitarian crisis across Iraq. Heavy rainfall on October 29 damaged internally displaced persons (IDP) camps in Tuz Khurmato in eastern Salah al-Din, near Fallujah, and near Baghdad. The heavy rains forced a temporary halt to operations in Ramadi, and the CoM formed a crisis cell to address wide-scale flooding.

7 Unrest continues over new salary scales and corruption. Government employees and teachers protested against salary scale changes in Baghdad, Basra, Diyala, Diwaniyah, Dhi Qar, and Najaf, Muthanna. Friday protests against corruption also occurred in Basra, Baghdad, Babil, Diyala, Diwaniya, Karbala, Maysan, Muthanna, and Wasit. Demonstrators in Diwaniya were injured as they attempted to storm government buildings as well as the Fadhila and Dawa parties' headquarters.

8 U.S. to increase activity in Iraq. President Barack Obama authorized a new Special Operations Task Force (SOTF) based in Arbil and intensified support for ISF operations to seize Ramadi on October 31. Anonymous U.S. and Iraqi Kurdish sources separately reported that a SOTF had been based out of Arbil to target ISIS leaders and that joint terminal attack controllers were operational in northern Iraq.

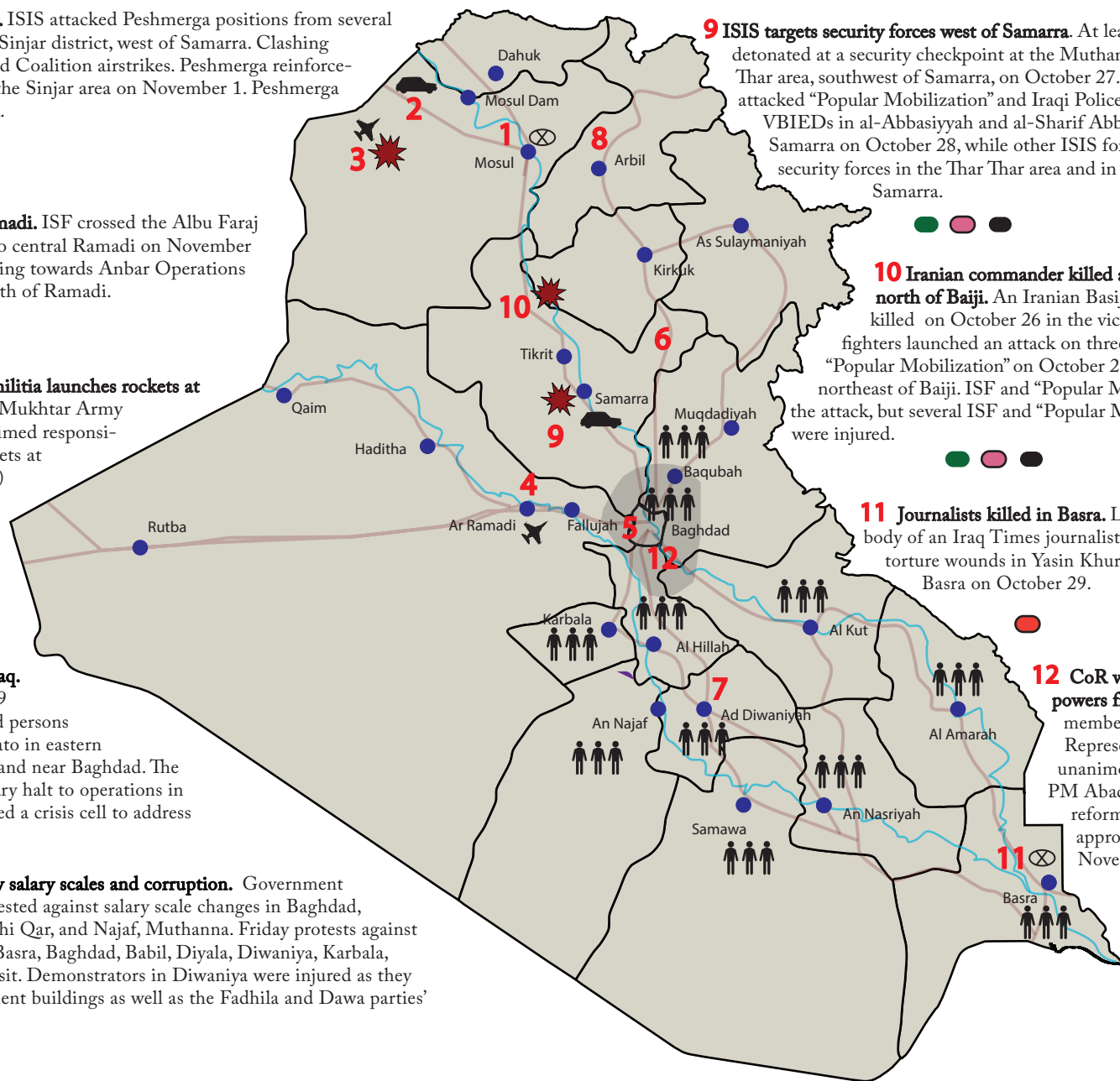


9 ISIS targets security forces west of Samarra. At least one SVBIED detonated at a security checkpoint at the Muthanna facility in the Thar Thar area, southwest of Samarra, on October 27. ISIS militants attacked "Popular Mobilization" and Iraqi Police (IP) with four VBIEDs in al-Abbasiyyah and al-Sharif Abbas areas north of Samarra on October 28, while other ISIS forces clashed with security forces in the Thar Thar area and in al-Hwesh, west of Samarra.

10 Iranian commander killed as fighting continues north of Baiji. An Iranian Basij commander was killed on October 26 in the vicinity of Baiji. ISIS fighters launched an attack on three axes against ISF and "Popular Mobilization" on October 28 in Fatha area, northeast of Baiji. ISF and "Popular Mobilization" repelled the attack, but several ISF and "Popular Mobilization" members were injured.

11 Journalists killed in Basra. Local police found the body of an Iraq Times journalist bearing gunshot and torture wounds in Yasin Khuraibat area of central Basra on October 29.

12 CoR withdraws reform powers from PM Abadi. 225 members of the Council of Representatives (CoR) unanimously ruled to withdraw PM Abadi's ability to launch reform packages without approval of the CoR on November 2.



100km

Content: Patrick Martin and ISW Iraq Team
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PM Haidar al-Abadi suffered a serious blow in his bid to reform and lead the government on November 2 when the Council of Representatives (CoR) unanimously ruled to withdraw his ability to launch reform packages unilaterally. CoR members voiced support for the reforms, but worded the motion as enforcing the separation of powers and keeping legislative powers within the CoR. PM Abadi's loss is Maliki's gain, as Maliki has capitalized on resistance to PM Abadi's reforms by openly speaking out against them and using his allies within the SLA to spearhead criticism of PM Abadi's governing style. PM Abadi has lost the confidence of the political blocs who supported his reform packages with his unilateral approach to introducing reforms, and the outcome of the vote was a response to his most recent and controversial reforms. These included changes to the salary scale and the appointment of a new Council of Ministers (CoM) secretary who holds U.S. citizenship. PM Abadi previously had numerous supporters for his reform agenda. However, in response to the salary scale changes, these supporters, including Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani and the political opponents of Vice President Nouri al-Maliki, including ISCI and the Sadrist Trend, have since diminished their support for him in light of the salary scale change. Sistani disagreed with PM Abadi over the final form for the salary scale reform, and thus voiced his disapproval. Maliki has likely used this opportunity to test the waters for an eventual no-confidence vote against PM Abadi. Sistani likely remains supportive of PM Abadi – Maliki's allies likely took advantage of Sistani's denouncement of the salary scale change to attack PM Abadi. In addition, former supporters of the reform program most likely used the CoR vote to both protect themselves from backlash by their constituencies over unpopular reform packages and to prevent PM Abadi from exercising any powers without their consultation.

ISF and tribal fighters reportedly crossed the Albu Faraj Bridge into central Ramadi. Significant action has not been reported in central Ramadi, indicating that the incursion does not constitute a meaningful tactical gain. However, the crossing is the first advance by the ISF into central Ramadi from the north since the city fell to ISIS on May 18. The ISF are also approaching the Anbar Operations Command headquarters building, but have not managed to capture it or the nearby Warrar Dam. The ISF have failed to make progress towards the city from the east and remain bogged down in fighting in villages between Ramadi and Habaniya. ISIS also attacked Peshmerga positions in Sinjar and Rabia districts in northwestern Ninewa province and continued pressuring ISF and "Popular Mobilization" fighters west if Samarra and north of Baiji, indicating a continued capacity to launch attacks across a wide territory. Meanwhile, President Barack Obama promised to "intensify" support to the ISF and would authorize a headquarters for U.S. special operator task