

# Iraq Situation Report: December 3 - 7, 2015

**1 Turkish troop deployment leads to outrage in Baghdad.** Turkey deployed “hundreds” of Turkish troops on December 4 to a camp near the KDP Peshmerga-controlled Mount Bashiqa, northeast of Mosul, ostensibly to train Peshmerga and local anti-ISIS fighters. Leading Shi’a and Sunni politicians as well as the Kurdish opposition parties, PUK and Gorran rejected the deployment. PM Abadi ordered Turkey to withdraw its troops from Mount Bashiqa within 48 hours on December 6, threatening to take the issue to the UN Security Council and ordering the Iraqi Air Force to “prepare to defend Iraq’s sovereignty.” Turkey stated that the deployment was coordinated with the Iraqi government, and it withdrew Turkish fighters from elsewhere in northern Iraq across the Turkey-Iraq border, but made no move to withdraw from Mosul’s outskirts as of December 7.

**2 Indirect fire hits central Samarra.** The Samarra council chairman stated that four Katyusha rockets landed in various areas in Samarra, killing two civilians and wounding 12 others.

**3 ISIS launches multiple VBIED attacks against advancing ISF near Ramadi.** The ISF destroyed at least four SVBIEDs between December 4 and 5 north of Ramadi. The ISF also reportedly destroyed at least two VBIEDs targeting Federal Police headquarters in 110 Kilo Area, west of Ramadi and a 7th IA Division headquarters in 35 Kilo Area, west of Ramadi. Some reports indicate as many as eight intercepted VBIEDS near Ramadi between December 4 and 5. The ISF and tribal fighters clashed with ISIS in Ta’mim area, south of Ramadi and in Madhiq and Eastern Husayba.

**4 Federal Police interdict ISIS SVEST attacks on Shi’a pilgrims in Baghdad.** Federal Police killed two ISIS militants wearing SVESTs in Mada’in area southeast of Baghdad and also killed an ISIS SVEST attacker in Tuwaitha, southeast of Baghdad on December 3.

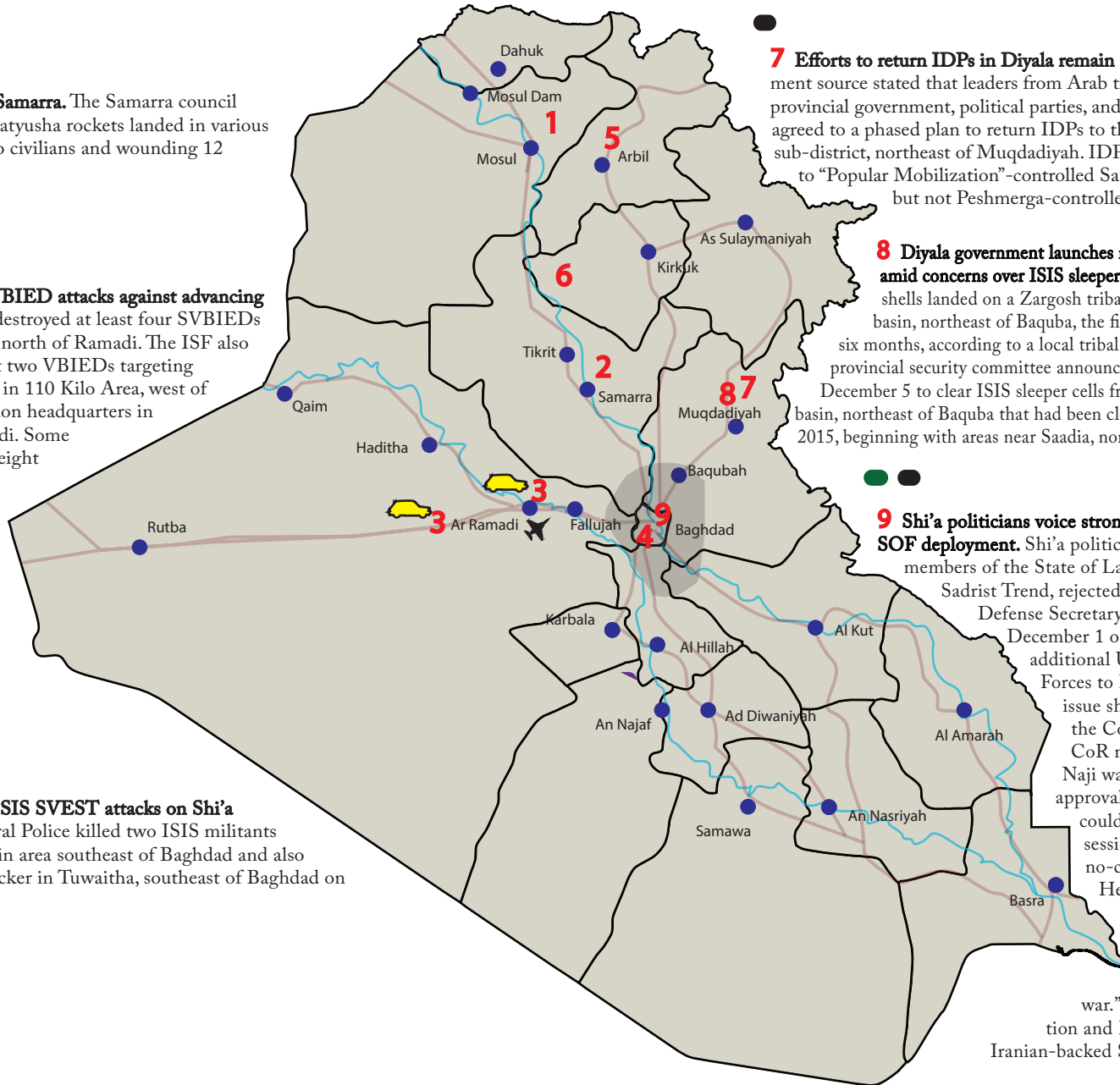
**5 Iraq suspends civilian flights in northern Iraq again due to Russian air interference.** Iraqi civil aviation suspended flights for Arbil and Suleimaniyah two days for the second time in two weeks because of Russian cruise missile and bomber traffic over northern Iraq.

**6 ISIS enforcing internal control in Hawija.** ISIS executed four people from the Obeid and Jubur tribes on December 3 in Hawija southeast of Kirkuk on charges of collaborating with the government, followed by two additional executions of civilians on December 7.

**7 Efforts to return IDPs in Diyala remain ongoing.** A government source stated that leaders from Arab tribes, Diyala’s provincial government, political parties, and Kurdish security agreed to a phased plan to return IDPs to their homes in Jalula sub-district, northeast of Muqdadiah. IDPs had been returning to “Popular Mobilization”-controlled Saadiya, south of Jalula, but not Peshmerga-controlled Jalula.

**8 Diyala government launches new security operation amid concerns over ISIS sleeper cells.** Three mortar shells landed on a Zargosh tribal village in the Hamrin basin, northeast of Baquba, the first event in the area in six months, according to a local tribal leader. The Diyala provincial security committee announced new operations on December 5 to clear ISIS sleeper cells from areas in the Hamrin basin, northeast of Baquba that had been cleared of ISIS fighters in 2015, beginning with areas near Saadia, northeast of Muqdadiah.

**9 Shi’a politicians voice strong opposition to U.S. SOF deployment.** Shi’a political parties, including members of the State of Law Alliance and the Sadrist Trend, rejected the announcement by Defense Secretary Ashton Carter on December 1 of the deployment of additional U.S. Special Operations Forces to Iraq, stating that the issue should be approved in the CoR. Badr Organization CoR member Muhammad Naji warned that PM Abadi’s approval of the deployment could lead to a questioning session and a possible no-confidence vote. Kata’ib Hezbollah stated that Abadi’s approval of additional U.S. forces could trigger an “all-out civil war.” The Badr Organization and Kata’ib Hezbollah are Iranian-backed Shi’a militias.



- Major Cities
- Coalition
- Turkey
- Failed S/VBIED
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Content: Patrick Martin and ISW Iraq Team  
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Turkey deployed “hundreds” of troops with armored vehicles northeast of Mosul on December 4, drawing outrage from the Iraqi government and Shi’a political parties. Turkey deployed forces near Mosul in a KDP-controlled area likely to ensure its immediate influence over anti-ISIS operations and thereby its long term influence within Mosul. The Turkish deployment coincided with high tension in Baghdad over the planned deployment of up to 200 U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF) to Iraq, announced on December 1, intended to target ISIS leaders directly. PM Abadi is facing intense pressure from other Shi’a political parties and Iranian-backed militias on account of both deployments. Some Shi’a parties asserted that the CoR, not the Prime Minister should approve foreign deployments. The Badr Organization raised the possibility of a no-confidence vote in PM Abadi. These measures will restrict PM Abadi’s ability to engage the U.S.-led coalition, the intended effect of Iranian-led forces in Iraq that seek to align Iraq with the Russian-Iranian coalition. Meanwhile, ISIS deployed mobile defenses against the ISF in Ramadi’s environs, demonstrating the continued ability to conduct attacks in the area despite recent gains by the ISF. A decisive ISF-led operation to clear Ramadi is essential for PM Abadi to exercise independence from Iran. ISIS’s resilience in Iraq remains a major obstacle to the ISF’s success.