

Iraq Situation Report: June 16 - 17, 2015

1 On June 15, ISIS attacked al-Kasak area, west of Mosul using heavy weapons. Peshmerga and U.S.-led Coalition airstrikes repelled the attack, killing four ISIS members. ISIS also attacked Iski area, northwest of Mosul, using heavy weapons and the Peshmerga repelled the attack, killing 18 ISIS fighters. Between June 16 and 17, DoD stated that eight airstrikes targeted ISIS “near Mosul.”



2 On June 16, Iraqi Air Force (IAF) airstrike reportedly killed 23 ISIS “suicide bombers” in al-Mohammadi area, north of Hit district. Separately, an Anbar Council of Representatives (CoR) member stated that tribal fighters killed the ISIS leader of Hit district using silenced weapons in the first reported instance of its kind. On June 17, an Iraqi airstrike targeted an ISIS camp in Zawiya area of Hit, killing 34 ISIS members.



3 On June 15, forces from the IA 52nd Brigade, 14th Division and the IA 29th Brigade, 7th Division conducted operations in Abu Flis and Habaniya areas, east of Ramadi, killing six ISIS members. On June 16, an Iraqi Army (IA) Aviation airstrike targeted ISIS sites and equipment in Khalidiya area, east of Ramadi, inflicting “heavy losses.” DoD announced one airstrike “near Ramadi.”



4 On June 15, forces from the IA 29th Infantry Brigade, 7th Division conducted operations using Kornet rockets in the Kilo 160 area, west of Ramadi, killing ISIS members and destroying several vehicles and a fuel tanker.



5 On June 15, the Interior Ministry (MoI) stated that an Iraqi Air Force (IAF) airstrike in Fallujah killed “30 suicide bombers,” staging for Baghdad. Another report stated that the strike killed 17 foreign ISIS members.



6 On June 16, the FP 4th Division reportedly killed nine ISIS members and destroyed medium and heavy weapons at an ISIS gathering near Amiriyat al-Fallujah, south of Fallujah.



7 On June 16, the commander of the Baghdad Operations Command (BOC) stated that BOC received 400 AT4 anti-tank rockets and has used them in combat in the Albu Suda area, northeast of Fallujah. The FP 7th Brigade also attacked ISIS near Garma sub-district, northeast of Fallujah, killing ten ISIS members. DoD announced one airstrike “near Fallujah.” On June 17, a PM commander stated that IA and the Popular Mobilization conducted operations in Albu Ramla, Albu Jassim, and al-Shihabi areas of Garma, killing “40” ISIS members. The ISF also destroyed seven ISIS vehicles in Albu Khanfar and a rocket launcher in al-Mukhtar village. An ISIS HMMWV attempted to enter al-Subaihat area, east of Fallujah, but a 1st Rapid Intervention Division (RID) force destroyed the vehicle and also destroyed an excavator south of Fallujah using Kornet rockets.



8 On June 16, a vehicle “broke through” or “bypassed” security barriers near the Imam Ali shrine in Najaf, and the ISF shot and killed the driver. Despite initial reports, the MoI later stated that the car had not been rigged with explosives and that there had been no “terrorist act.” On June 17, the Najaf council chairman stated that the event constituted a “major security breach.”



- Major Cities
- Coalition
- ISF
- Major Clash
- Anti-ISIS Iraqi Sunni Tribes
- ISIS
- Iraqi Airstrikes
- Peshmerga
- Iraqi Shi'a militias

9 On June 15, fighting continued in Baiji district, in Siniya sub-district, west of Baiji, and in Albu Juwari, north of Baiji. On June 16, 11 ISIS fighters and six members of Jund al-Imam, an Iraqi Shi'a militia, were reportedly killed during clashes in Tel Abu Jarad, west of Baiji. On June 17, ISIS captured Tel Abu Jarad, killing five FP officers while 14 ISIS fighters were reportedly killed. ISIS fighters reportedly infiltrated Asri and Askari neighborhoods in Baiji and clashed with the ISF near al-Fatah mosque in southern Baiji. Between June 16 and 17, DoD announced two airstrikes “near Baiji.”



10 On June 16, FP and Popular Mobilization fighters killed 11 ISIS members on the “outskirts” of the Baiji Refinery. On June 17, the FP 2nd Commando Brigade attacked an ISIS “barracks” in al-Fatha area, northeast of Baiji, killing eight ISIS fighters. IA 34th Brigade, 9th Division forces also reportedly killed ISIS fighters and destroyed a vehicle-mounted rocket launcher “north of Baiji.”



11 On June 17, U.S.-led Coalition airstrikes reportedly targeted ISIS sites in Dawanzah Hiwar village in Sarkaran sub-district of al-Dibis district, northwest of Kirkuk, killing “35” ISIS members and destroying nine vehicles outfitted with heavy machine guns and a weapons warehouse.



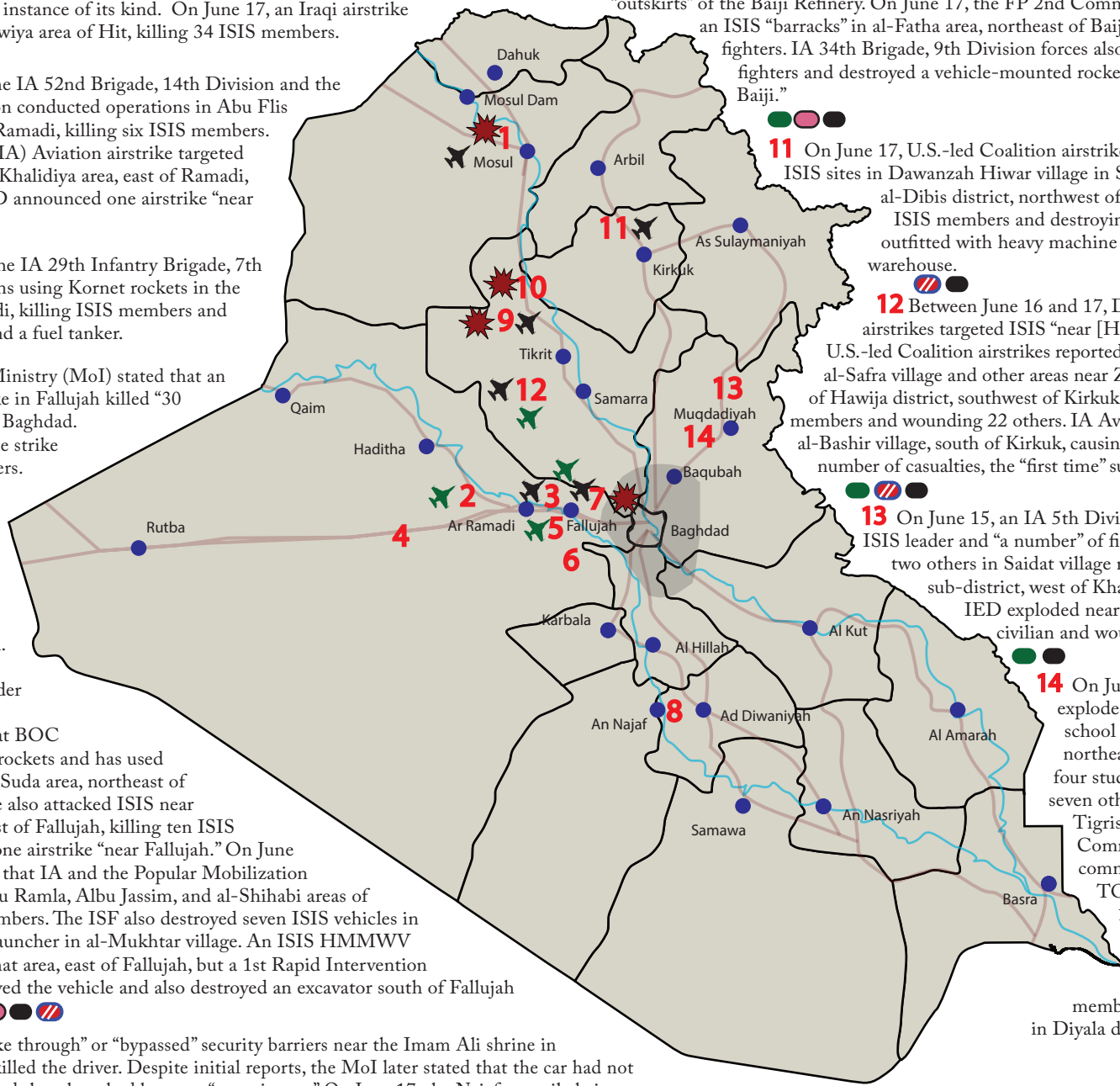
12 Between June 16 and 17, DoD stated that two airstrikes targeted ISIS “near [Hawija].” On June 17 U.S.-led Coalition airstrikes reportedly targeted ISIS sites in al-Safra village and other areas near Zaab and Riyadh areas of Hawija district, southwest of Kirkuk, killing ten ISIS members and wounding 22 others. IA Aviation also targeted al-Bashir village, south of Kirkuk, causing an unspecified number of casualties, the “first time” such raids have occurred.



13 On June 15, an IA 5th Division force killed an ISIS leader and “a number” of fighters and arrested two others in Saidat village near Qara Tapa sub-district, west of Khanaqin. On June 16, an IED exploded near Qara Tapa, killing a civilian and wounding another.



14 On June 16, an IED exploded near a girls’ middle school in al-Mukhisa area, northeast of Baquba, killing four students and injuring seven others. On June 17, the Tigris Operations Command (TOC) commander stated that TOC had mobilized 10,000 IA and Iraqi Police (IP) members and 5,000 “Popular Mobilization” members to ensure security in Diyala during Ramadan.



Content: Theodore Bell, Patrick Martin, and ISW Iraq Team
 Graphics: Evan Sterling



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The Iraqi Interior Ministry (MoI) reportedly directed Iraqi Air Force (IAF) airstrikes that killed 53 would-be “suicide bombers,” 23 north of Hit and 30 in Fallujah, the latter reportedly staging for Baghdad. While these numbers may be exaggerated, they follow earlier reports of at least 36 VBIEDs between June 6 and 15, the majority of which were intercepted and destroyed by the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). ISIS may intend to carry out coordinated, complex attacks during Ramadan, likely against remaining ISF positions along the Euphrates as well as against Shi'a sites and government facilities in Baghdad, and the successful interdiction of attempted suicide attacks by ISIS as Ramadan begins is a promising trend. Heavy fighting has meanwhile continued in Baiji district and around Baiji Refinery, where recent ISF advances have been challenged by ISIS, which reportedly recaptured Tel Abu Jarad, west of Baiji, which the ISF and Popular Mobilization reportedly cleared on May 31. Taken together with SVBIED attacks over the weekend on ISF and Popular Mobilization positions in Hajjaj, south of Baiji, these developments illustrate ISIS's ability and intent to challenge previously ‘cleared’ terrain across northern Iraq. ISIS initiated clashes with the Peshmerga west of Mosul, and additionally U.S. and Iraqi airstrikes have targeted ISIS north and south of Kirkuk amid further ISIS-ISF clashes in the Hamrin, east of Tikrit, and in Diyala. Clashes in Diyala, including IED attacks, prompted the Tigris Operation Command on June 17 to announce the mobilization of 10,000 Iraqi Army (IA) and Iraqi Police (IP) members and 5,000 Popular Mobilization fighters to maintain security in the province over Ramadan. Diyala provincial officials have recently expressed concern about deteriorating security and fears of an ISIS reemergence in the province. In Najaf, despite initial fears, a car that broke through security barriers at the Imam Ali Shrine was reported not to have been an SVBIED. However, the incident nonetheless highlights security deficiencies at a major Shi'a shrine and a principal ISIS target, a successful attack on which would likely cause a severe sectarian backlash.