

Iraq Situation Report: June 23 - 24, 2015

1 On June 23, a Kurdish source stated that an IED exploded south of Mosul along the Qayyarah-Mosul road, killing an ISIS “finance minister” and four ISIS fighters. The source noted that the “Mosul Independent Youth” claimed responsibility. On June 24, an unnamed Operations Command stated that U.S.-led Coalition airstrikes killed an unspecified number of ISIS members in Qayyarah sub-district, south of Mosul, including “more than 40” ISIS members in the Tel Abta area of Qayyarah.

2 On June 24, the Peshmerga stated that Zervani forces, a Peshmerga paramilitary force dominated by the Kurdistan Democratic Party, supported by the U.S.-led Coalition attacked and destroyed an ISIS position in Tishti village in the al-Kasak area, west of Mosul. A separate report quoted an unnamed Operations Command statement that U.S.-led Coalition airstrikes also destroyed an ISIS storage tunnel in the al-Wailiya area, northwest of Mosul, and a tanker VBIED in Qubuk village, north of Tal Afar. DoD and CENTCOM confirmed three airstrikes “near Tal Afar” and three airstrikes “near Mosul” between June 23 and 24.

3 On June 23, the Federal Police (FP) commander stated that “intelligence reconnaissance battalions” used Kornet rockets to destroy three ISIS vehicles in the al-Fatha area, northeast of Baiji. On June 24, ISIS attacked the al-Fatha area with three “suicide attacks” followed by mortar shells, killing five FP members and wounding eight others. Iraqi Police (IP) and “Popular Mobilization” reinforcements from al-Alam sub-district north of Tikrit repelled the attack.

4 On June 22, two anonymous U.S. “senior administration officials” stated that anywhere from “only a few” to “hundreds” of “Popular Mobilization” and Iranian-backed Iraqi Shi’a militia members are present to coordinate with the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) at Taqqadum Airbase, south of Habaniya. One official stated that U.S. intelligence reports indicate that some of the militias are spying on U.S. personnel at the base. On June 23, an anonymous DoD spokesperson stated that there is no coordination between U.S. troops and the “Popular Mobilization” but asserted that the colocation of U.S. troops and “Popular Mobilization” forces on military bases was not an issue as long as the forces fall under the command-and-control of the Iraqi government. Pentagon spokesman Col. Steven Warren confirmed that a “low double-digits” number of Iraqi Shi’a militiamen remain at Taqqadum to liaise with the Iraqi government but stated that U.S. forces had required that the militias vacate the base as a precondition for the U.S. deployment, noting that the militias previously stationed at Taqqadum now reside outside the base’s gates and have been “banned” from entry.

5 On June 23, the Kirkuk Migration and Displacement department director stated that 350 families of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) returned to Tikrit from Kirkuk with others expected to follow in the coming days. The director noted that this was the third wave of IDPs to return to Tikrit.

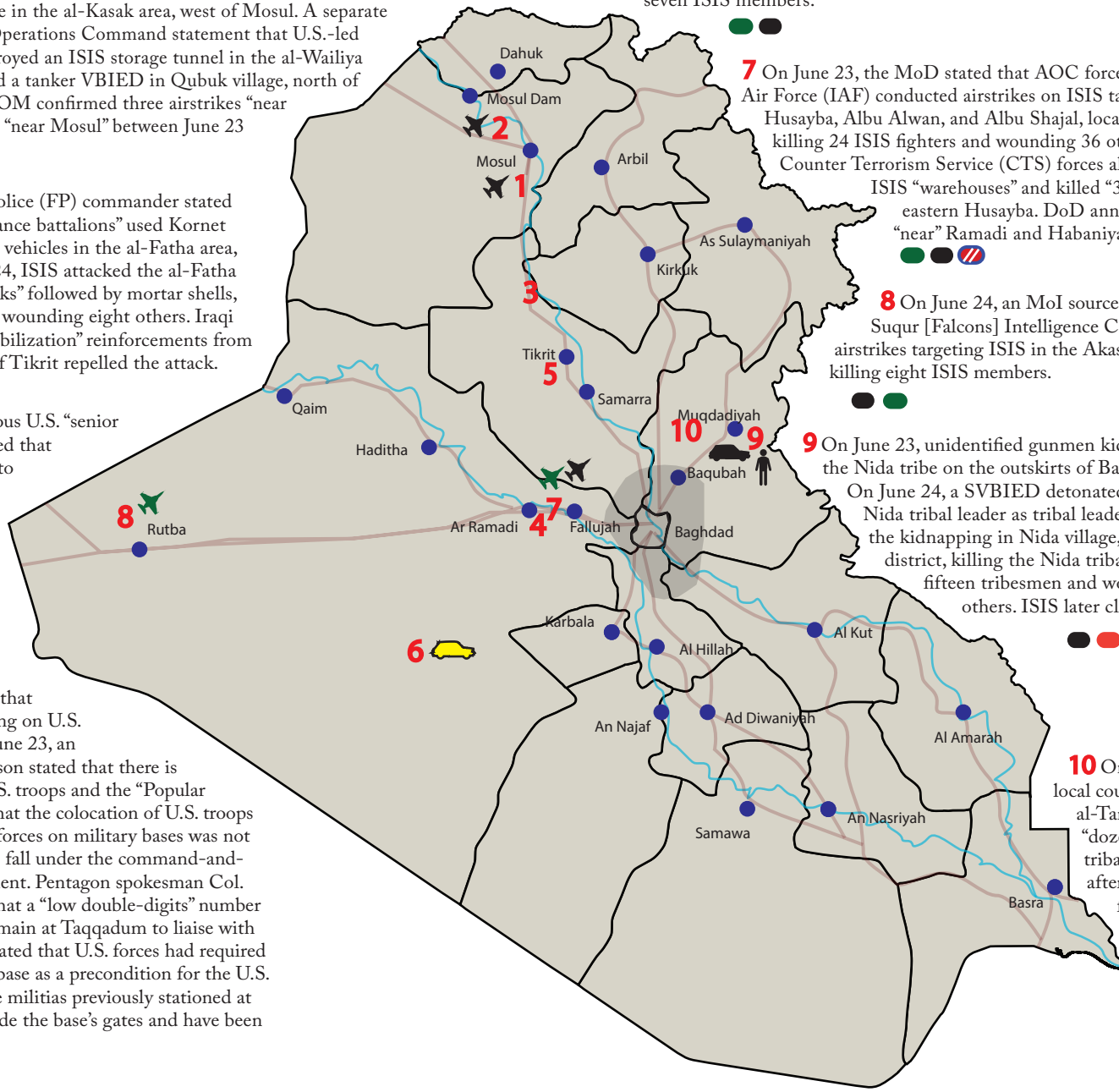
6 On June 23, an anonymous source in the Anbar Operations Command (AOC) stated that ISIS attacked a checkpoint in the al-Rahaliya area of Nukhaib district, west of Karbala. The ISF repelled the attack, destroying one SVBIED and killing seven ISIS members.

7 On June 23, the MoD stated that AOC forces supported by the Iraqi Air Force (IAF) conducted airstrikes on ISIS targets in eastern Husayba, Albu Alwan, and Albu Shajal, located east of Ramadi, killing 24 ISIS fighters and wounding 36 others. IA Aviation and Counter Terrorism Service (CTS) forces also reportedly destroyed ISIS “warehouses” and killed “30” ISIS members in eastern Husayba. DoD announced five airstrikes “near” Ramadi and Habaniya.

8 On June 24, an MoI source stated that the MoI Suqur [Falcons] Intelligence Cell directed two Iraqi airstrikes targeting ISIS in the Akashat area, north of Rutba, killing eight ISIS members.

9 On June 23, unidentified gunmen kidnapped an elder from the Nida tribe on the outskirts of Balad Ruz, east of Baquba. On June 24, a SVBIED detonated at the home of the Nida tribal leader as tribal leaders gathered to discuss the kidnapping in Nida village, north of Balad Ruz district, killing the Nida tribal leader along with fifteen tribesmen and wounding thirty-six others. ISIS later claimed the attack.

10 On June 24, Muqdadiah local council chairman Adnan al-Tamimi stated that “dozens” of Bani Tamim tribal members held protests after the ISF raided a tribal figure’s house on charges of kidnapping.



- Major Cities
- ★ Major Clash
- ✈ Iraqi Airstrikes
- ✈ Airstrikes
- 🚗 SVBIED
- 🚗 Failed S/VBIED
- 👤 Kidnapping
- 🚚 Coalition
- Anti-ISIS Iraqi Sunni Tribes
- ISF
- Unknown Gunmen
- Iraqi Shi’a militias
- ISIS

100km

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Diyala Province will likely become the renewed focus of security efforts amidst an ISIS resurgence in the province. An ISIS attack against a tribal gathering near Balad Ruz in eastern Diyala highlights ISIS’s revitalized capability to project force in Diyala after militia-led operations largely dislodged it from the region by January 2015. The attack prompted the recently-elected governor of Diyala Province, who is also a senior leader in the Iranian-backed Badr Organization, to call for a military operation in the east of the province. Diyala serves as a major stronghold for the Badr Organization, which has thousands of fighters actively deployed against ISIS throughout Iraq. An escalation in Diyala could therefore prompt the Badr Organization to redirect resources from elsewhere in Iraq to defend its key terrain. Such a redeployment would likely hinder the Badr Organization from pursuing its national military campaign against ISIS in Salah ad-Din and Anbar Provinces. It also remains possible that an escalation by ISIS in Diyala could foment increased sectarian and ethnic tension in the demographically-mixed regions of the province being targeted by ISIS. ISW assessed that ISIS would attempt to increase its attacks by Suicide Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Devices (SVBIEDs) and VBIEDs against civilian and military targets during Ramadan. The use of anti-tank weaponry continues to mitigate this threat by destroying some VBIEDs prior to detonation. But ISIS’s intent to use this signature weapon has not diminished. Meanwhile, reports have begun to circulate regarding an initiative led by the Kingdom of Jordan to arm Iraqi Sunnis. An Anbari member of the Council of Representatives (CoR) stated that the initiative follows negotiations between senior Iraqi Sunni politicians and the Jordanian government. However, this initiative faces numerous challenges which will likely limit its chances at success. For one, the recruitment of Sunni fighters continues to be hindered by resistance from government officials and bureaucrats in Baghdad. For another, the number of volunteers is still lower than expected, as Defense Secretary Ashton Carter recently testified. Statements regarding the initiative have also not specified whether Jordan will provide funds to sustain the salaries and other long-term costs of an Iraqi Sunni force – a key question given the financial crisis currently faced by the Iraqi government. The IED attack south of Mosul, if it indeed happened, illustrates that low level anti-ISIS activities in ISIS-held areas persist despite ISIS’s campaign of intimidation, systematic disarmament, and executions. It is not possible to confirm or deny the veracity of this event.