

# Iraq Situation Report: June 27 - 29, 2015

**1** On June 29, KH leader and Deputy Chairman of the Popular Mobilization Commission Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis announced in an informal interview the formation of “Mosul liberation force that will stage in this area (presumably Baiji) and advance toward Mosul with the armed forces and the people of Mosul.” However, Muhandis did not indicate what agency would form this force and whether it is a new force or he was speaking of the forces currently in Baiji: Asa’ib Ahl al-Haq (AAH), Kata’ib Hezbollah (KH,) the Badr Organization, the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), and likely other groups. The Iraqi government has already formed Ninewa Operations Command (NOC) under the command of Gen. Najim Abdullah al-Juburi.



**2** On June 27, unnamed Iraqi intelligence services captured senior Saddam-era government official and key Iraqi Ba’th Party leader Abdul-Baqi Abdul-Karim al-Saadoun in the Itifalat Square area in southern Kirkuk. On June 28, unidentified gunmen killed the North Kirkuk Oil Administration director in the Arafah neighborhood of northern Kirkuk. However, another report described his position as the director of the operations.



**3** On June 28, the commander of the Babil Operations Command stated that six Iraqi Army (IA) battalions under Babil Operations Command have formed a cordon to restrict ISIS freedom of movement southwest of Ramadi. Between June 27 and 28, CENTCOM reported three U.S.-led Coalition airstrikes “near Habbaniyah”.



**4** On June 29, the Anbar provincial council stated that “Popular Mobilization and militia members” burned “dozens” of civilian homes in Nukhaib, west of Karbala, an area that has a large Sunni community and has been the focus of territorial dispute between the local governments of Anbar and Karbala. The council called for an immediate investigation and the removal of the “Popular Mobilization and the militias” from Nukhaib.



**5** On June 29, unknown gunmen wearing military uniforms broke into two houses in al-Mishada sub-district in Tarimiya, north of Baghdad, and used silenced weapons, to kill five members of the “Tribal Mobilization,” referring to anti-ISIS Iraqi Sunni fighters in the area.



**6** Between June 28 and 29, DoD confirmed four U.S.-led Coalition airstrikes “near Baiji”. On June 29, the FP announced renewed clearing operations in Baiji and a Badr Organization official stated that Badr, AAH, KH, and FP forces have advanced in Baiji district.



**7** On June 28, a “Popular Mobilization” spokesman stated that ISIS fighters attacked FP and “Popular Mobilization” forces in the Hamrin Mountains on the border of Salah al-Din and Kirkuk provinces. FP and the “Popular Mobilization” repelled the attack, killing ISIS fighters. On June 29, the Dajila Operations Command (DOC) stated that ISIS fighters attacked the ISF and “Popular Mobilization” in the Ajil and Alas oil fields, east of Tikrit but the ISF repelled the attack.



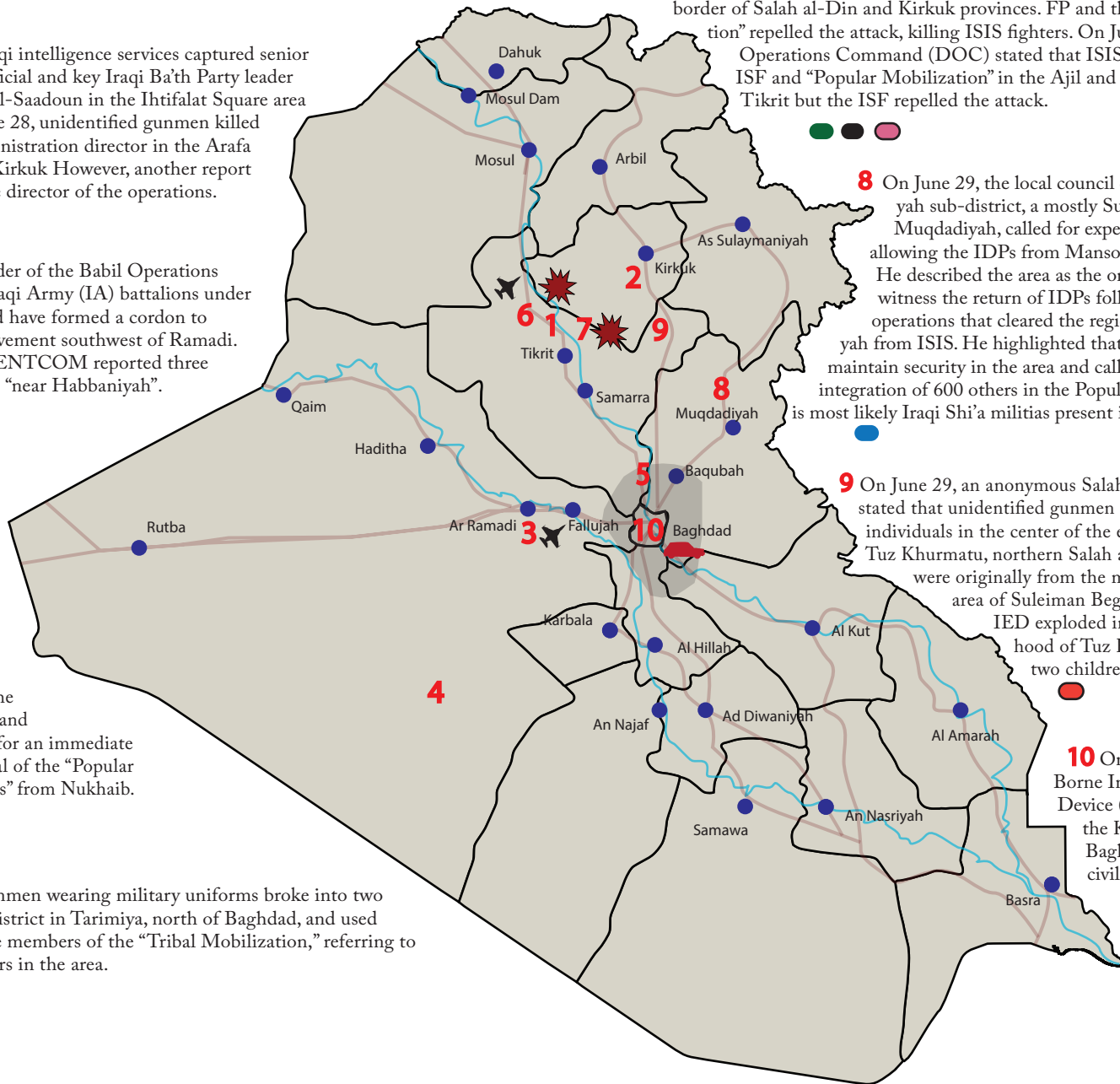
**8** On June 29, the local council chairman for Mansouriyah sub-district, a mostly Sunni area north of Muqadadiyah, called for expediting the process for allowing the IDPs from Mansouriyat al-Jabal to return. He described the area as the only one that did not witness the return of IDPs following the January 2015 operations that cleared the region north of Muqadadiyah from ISIS. He highlighted that 200 tribal fighters maintain security in the area and called for expediting the integration of 600 others in the Popular Mobilization. There is most likely Iraqi Shi’a militias present in the area as well.



**9** On June 29, an anonymous Salah ad-Din security source stated that unidentified gunmen kidnapped three individuals in the center of the ethnically mixed area of Tuz Khurmatu, northern Salah ad-Din. The individuals were originally from the mostly Sunni nearby area of Suleiman Beg. Also on June 29, an IED exploded in the Askari neighborhood of Tuz Khurmatu, wounding two children.



**10** On June 27, a Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Device (VBIED) exploded in the Karrada area of central Baghdad, wounding 14 civilians.



- Major Cities
- Anti-ISIS Iraqi Sunni Tribes
- ★ Major Clash
- ISF
- VBIED
- Unknown Gunmen
- Iraqi Shi’a militias
- Airstrikes
- Coalition
- ISIS

Content: Sinan Adnan, Theodore Bell, Patrick Martin, and ISW Iraq Team  
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There have been unconfirmed reports of advances by the Federal Police (FP) and Iranian-backed Iraqi Shi’a militias in Baiji district amid renewed clearing operations declared by the FP. Reinvigorated militia operations in Baiji district, including by Asa’ib Ahl al-Haq (AAH), Kata’ib Hezbollah (KH), and the Badr Organization illustrate the increased operational tempo of the Iranian-backed Iraqi Shi’a militias following the fall of Ramadi on May 17, albeit not in line with the Iraqi government’s stated priority of Ramadi and Anbar. In the context of these reported advances, Popular Mobilization Deputy Chairman Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis announced, in an informal interview likely in Baiji district, the formation of “Mosul liberation force that will stage in this area and advance toward Mosul with the armed forces and the people of Mosul.” However, Muhandis did not provide more specifics. Muhandis, a U.S.-designated terrorist, is a strongly influential figure among the Iranian-backed Iraqi Shi’a militias as well as a key conduit for Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps – Qods Force commander Qassem Soleimani in Iraq. Meanwhile, the ISF captured senior Saddam-era government official and key Iraqi Ba’th Party leader Abdul-Baqi Abdul-Karim al-Saadoun over the weekend. Saadoun headed one of three rival Iraqi Ba’th Party factions within post-2003 Iraq, the other two led by Mohammed Yunes al-Ahmed and Saddam-era Vice-President Izzat al-Duri. The capture of Saadoun constitutes a blow to Iraqi Ba’thists following Duri’s unconfirmed death but likely detention by the ISF in April.