

Iraq Situation Report: July 09 - 10, 2015

1 U.S.-led Coalition airstrikes reportedly supported Peshmerga forces in Bartala district, east of Mosul, and in three neighborhoods of Sinjar district, west of Mosul. A U.S.-led Coalition airstrike also reportedly targeted an ISIS convoy in Halabiya village near Iski Mosul, west of Mosul. DoD announced one airstrike “near Sinjar” and another “near Mosul.”



2 Clashes continued in Saqlawiya sub-district, north of Fallujah as the ISF, “Popular Mobilization,” and tribal fighters attempted to encircle Fallujah. On July 9, the ISF and “Popular Mobilization” forces advanced and raised the Iraqi flag over government buildings in the Saqlawiya sub-district. DoD announced three airstrikes “near Fallujah”. On July 10, the ISF, tribal fighters, and the “Popular Mobilization,” including the Iranian-backed militia Saraya al-Khorasani, recaptured al-Matir and al-Ghinan villages, north of Fallujah.



3 Iraqi Shi’a militias remain active in the contested Garma sub-district, northeast of Fallujah. On July 10, Saraya al-Jihad stated that it was fighting to cut off the “last supply bridge” between Fallujah and Garma. A medical source in Balad, south of Samarra, stated that Balad hospitals received 27 dead and 41 wounded Iraqi Army (IA) soldiers and “Popular Mobilization” members, “mostly from the Badr Organization,” from fighting around Fallujah and Garma.



4 On July 9, a truck exploded, likely caused by an Adhesive Explosive Device, near Akir in Jabla sub-district, northeast of Hilla in Babil, a province that has not witnessed significant violence or activity by ISIS since 2014. Multiple sources reported that the driver and passenger of the truck survived the explosion, suggesting that it was not caused by a VBIED.



5 On July 10, ISIS attacked Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and “Popular Mobilization” positions in the ISF-held Khalidiya sub-district, east of Ramadi, with five SVBIEDs and mortar fire. The ISF and “Popular Mobilization” repelled the attack after reinforcements arrived from Habaniya Airbase. DoD announced one airstrike “near Ramadi” the day prior.



6 On July 10, ISIS demonstrated its continued capacity to carry out attacks in Baghdad by detonating a VBIED in al-Zafraniya neighborhood in southern Baghdad, killing two unidentified individuals and wounding 31 others.



7 Security remains tenuous in areas of Diyala province recaptured from ISIS as internally displaced persons (IDPs) return to the area. On July 9, unknown gunmen attacked a “Popular Mobilization” checkpoint on the outskirts of al-Zour area, north of Muqdadaiya district, killing three “Popular Mobilization” fighters. On July 10, the Muqdadaiya council chairman called for an operation to clear al-Zour area. 245 IDP families meanwhile returned from Khanaqin near the Iranian border to their homes in the vicinity of Muqdadaiyah. The Diyala provincial council chairman stated that an agreement with the IA 5th Division commander will permit “more than 248” IDP families to return to Saadia sub-district, southwest of Khanaqin, where IDPs have not yet returned, after July 17th.



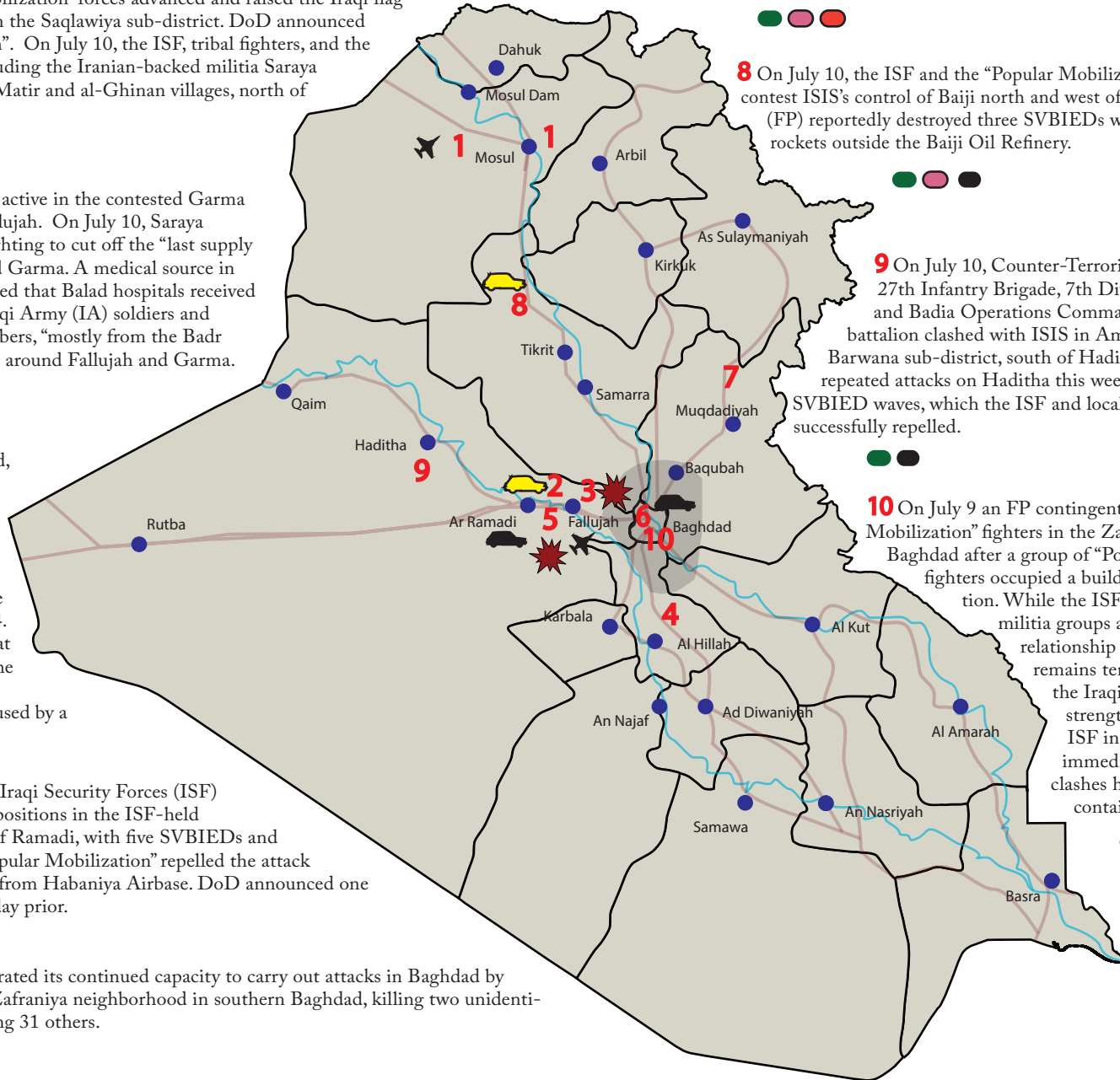
8 On July 10, the ISF and the “Popular Mobilization” continued to contest ISIS’s control of Baiji north and west of the city. Federal Police (FP) reportedly destroyed three SVBIEDs with Kornet anti-tank rockets outside the Baiji Oil Refinery.



9 On July 10, Counter-Terrorism Service (CTS), IA 27th Infantry Brigade, 7th Division, and a Jazeera and Badia Operations Command (JBOC) commando battalion clashed with ISIS in Amlijiya village in Barwana sub-district, south of Haditha. ISIS launched repeated attacks on Haditha this week, including multiple SVBIED waves, which the ISF and local tribal fighters successfully repelled.



10 On July 9 an FP contingent clashed with “Popular Mobilization” fighters in the Zayona district of eastern Baghdad after a group of “Popular Mobilization” fighters occupied a building within FP jurisdiction. While the ISF fights alongside various militia groups across Iraq, the relationship between the two sides remains tense in the capital, where the Iraqi government seeks to strengthen the position of the ISF in the absence of an immediate ISIS threat. Similar clashes have previously been contained.



- Major Cities
- SVBIED
- Anti-ISIS Iraqi Sunni Tribes
- Major Clash
- Failed S/VBIED
- Iraqi Shi’a militias
- Iraqi Airstrikes
- ISF
- Unknown Gunmen
- Airstrikes
- Coalition
- ISIS

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



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The Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), supported by the “Popular Mobilization” and tribal fighters, are pursuing multiple complementary lines of effort in eastern Anbar Province to encircle and isolate Fallujah and cut ISIS supply lines to Ramadi. The Iraqi government previously identified the recapture of Ramadi as its primary objective in Anbar Province. However, since May, Iranian-backed Iraqi Shi’a militias have identified Fallujah as their primary objective, which is also drawing significant ISF resources. On July 5, the Anbar Operations Command (AOC) launched an operation north of Fallujah, and it appears that the operational priorities of the ISF and Shi’a militias in Anbar are now aligning around Fallujah. The ISF and Iraqi Shi’a militias continue to contest the outskirts Garma, northeast of Fallujah, while the new AOC-announced offensive seeks to capture Saqlawiya sub-district, northwest of Fallujah. The ISF, “Popular Mobilization,” and local tribal fighters have advanced in Saqlawiya and are now threatening ISIS’s supply lines between Fallujah and Ramadi. The other main road between Fallujah and Ramadi runs through ISF-held Khalidiya, east of Ramadi and northwest of Taqaddum Airbase. ISIS launched five SVBIEDs on Khalidiya, the largest attack of its kind since the immediate aftermath of the fall of Ramadi on May 17, indicating a likely effort by ISIS to divert attention from Saqlawiya and Fallujah. In Diyala Province, security remains tenuous amid the slow return of IDPs to areas that the Iraqi Shi’a militias recaptured from ISIS in the fall of 2014. Diyala provincial and district-level government officials have repeatedly voiced their fears in recent months over a reemergence of ISIS in the province. Diyala Province, which shares an extensive border with Iran, remains a priority for the Iranian-backed Iraqi Shi’a militias, and the reemergence of ISIS would likely prompt renewed militia operations in the area. ISIS may seek to orchestrate the redeployment of the Iranian-backed Iraqi Shi’a militias to Diyala to alleviate pressure from the militias in Anbar. Renewed militia operations would undoubtedly displace more Sunnis from Diyala, fueling Sunni resentment that ISIS will seek to exploit to expand in the province.