Iraq Situation Report: July 14 - 16, 2015

1 ISIS continues to prioritize Haditha district. ISIS attacked the Residential Complex and the Jowana area of Baghdadi sub-district, south of Hadith district on July 14. "Popular Mobilization" forces repelled the attack on the Residential Complex and IA forces repelled the attack on Jowana, destroying a HMMWV VBIED. DoD reported two airstrikes "near Haditha." ISF forces and Sunni tribal fighters stationed near al-Asad Airbase, south of Haditha, launched an attack on ISIS east of Baghdadi sub-district, northeast of al-Asad Airbase on July 15, likely to prevent ISIS from launching additional attacks on Haditha. IA and tribal fighters repelled an ISIS attack near Baghdadi on July 16 and destroyed three boats carrying ISIS members across the Euphrates in the vicinity of Baghdadi, killing nine ISIS members. ISIS has increasingly launched multiple attacks, including SVBIED waves, on Haditha in recent weeks.

2 U.S. support to ISF operations in Ramadi. DoD reported 37 airstrikes "near Ramadi" and three airstrikes "near Habbaniyah" between July 13-16, amid an ongoing operation by the ISF to "liberate Anbar" announced on July 13. The ISF retains positions northeast, east, south, southwest, and west of Ramadi and has established defensive berms in Khalidiya and Husayba, east of Ramadi, likely in response to the SVBIED wave on Khalidiya last week that the ISF repelled. The ISF maintains indirect fire against ISIS's positions in Ramadi city but has not managed to advance toward central Ramadi.

3 Persistent probing attacks by ISIS on Nukhaib. ISIS launched an SVBIED against a border police checkpoint at the entrance to Nukhaib sub-district, west of Karbala, killing three IP members on July 14.

4 Closure of Trebil border crossing. The MoI announced the temporary closure of the Trebil border crossing with Jordan on July 16 in order to cut off the revenue stream ISIS derived from taxing truck drivers.

5 Clashes continue around Fallujah with no decisive gains by the ISF. ISF and Iranian proxy militias reported advances in Saqlawiya, northwest of Fallujah between July 14-15. The ISF and "Popular Mobilization" forces have made no decisive territorial gains in the vicinity of Fallujah, however, following the Joint Operations Command's announced operation on July 13 to "liberate Anbar." The ISF reportedly deployed "three battalions" of reinforcements from Habbaniya Base, east of Ramadi and west of Fallujah on July 15. "Popular Mobilization" forces and the ISF interdicted two VBIEDs in Saqlawiya on July 16. DoD reported 11 airstrikes "near Fallujah" between July 14-16.

6 Baiji remains contested. IA and "Popular Mobilization" forces reportedly recaptured Albu Jawari, north of Baiji district and south of the Baiji Refinery on July 14. ISIS launched a complex attack using an SVBIED and dismounted fighters against ISF and "Popular Mobilization" positions in central Baiji, killing 11 and wounding 10 on July 15. Meanwhile, the ISF and "Popular Mobilization" attacked ISIS in Seneya, west of Baiji, an area that the anti-ISIS forces previously attacked but failed to capture.

7 ISIS reemerges in northeastern Salah ad-Din. ISIS launched attacks spanning from the al-Zarka bridge to the al-Abraj area west of Tuz Khurmatu district, south of Kirkuk on July 15, initiating clashes that lasted for three hours. The commander of Peshmerga forces in Tuz Khurmatu stated that the Peshmerga repelled the attack and that ISIS failed to attain its objective of reaching the western outskirts of Tuz Khurmatu.

8 Indicators of ISIS's re-emergence in Diyala Province. ISIS launched a VBIED in Khalis district, northwest of Baquba, killing four people and wounding 17 others on July 14. Diyala Provincial Council member Kareem Jubouri stated that 700 "Popular Mobilization" fighters in the Sharween area, northeast Baquba have not received salaries in eight months and have not received weapons, challenging their ability to secure the area against ISIS.

9 Militia kidnaps locals in Dujail. A tribal sheikh in Dujail, south of Samarra, named Mohammed al-Khazraji stated on July 16 that members of an "influential militia" kidnapped 12 residents, including the sheikh's brother, from al-Tel al-Firansi, east of Dujail district on July 12. The sheikh called for protection from the central government and requested assistance from Qais al-Khazali and Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq (AAH) in recovering the individuals kidnapped.

Legend

- ● Major Cities
- ✦ Major Clash
- ✈ Iraqi Airstrikes
- ✈ Airstrikes
- 🚗 SVBIED
- 🚗 VBIED
- 🚗 Failed S/VBIED
- 🧍 Kidnapping
- ● Anti-ISIS Iraqi Sunni Tribes
- ● Iraqi Shi'a militias
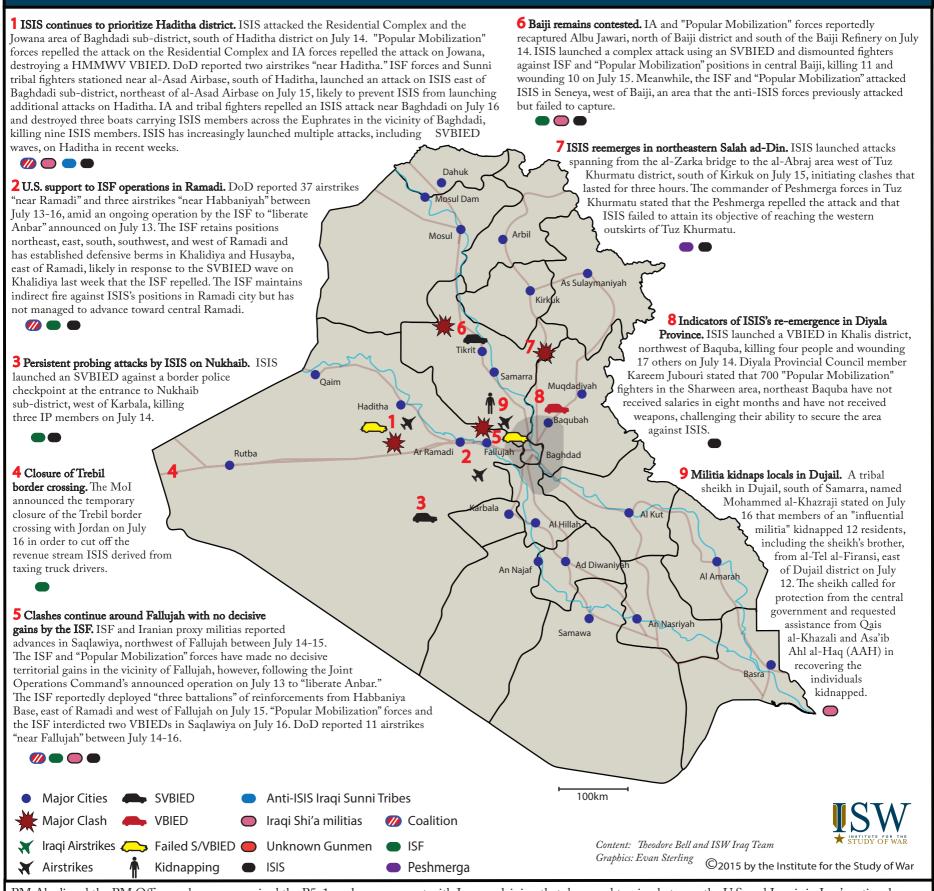- ● Unknown Gunmen
- ● ISIS
- ● Coalition
- ● ISF
- ● Peshmerga

100km

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PM Abadi and the PM Office spokesperson praised the P5+1 nuclear agreement with Iran, explaining that decreased tension between the U.S. and Iran is in Iraq's national interest. Meanwhile, clashes intensified around Fallujah and Ramadi following the formal commencement of Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) operations to "liberate Anbar" on July 13. The positioning of ISF and "Popular Mobilization" northwest, west, and northeast of Fallujah suggest that the combined forces' aim to encircle Fallujah, isolating the city from Ramadi. The ISF and Iranian proxy militias reported minor advances in Saqlawiya, northwest of Fallujah, but made no decisive territorial gains. Meanwhile the ISF deployed major reinforcements west of Fallujah from Habbaniya Base, east of Ramadi, suggesting a stalled ISF advance on western Fallujah. DoD reported 37 airstrikes "near Ramadi" during this reporting period, a significant increase in U.S. air support that may illustrate greater commitment by the U.S. to support ISF-led operations in Ramadi, rather than militia-dominated operations in Fallujah. An unconfirmed report indicates that ISIS may have sent reinforcements to Fallujah from Syria and Mosul. ISIS also continued to attack Haditha district and surrounding sub-districts in western Anbar with VBIEDs and direct fire as ISIS's siege of the city of Haditha strains economic conditions there. ISIS may attack Haditha either to divert attention from Ramadi and Fallujah, or to seize Haditha while ISF and militia operations are concentrated elsewhere. ISIS also remains capable of contesting ISF and "Popular Mobilization" advances in Baiji in Salah ad-Din and also launched a significant attack against Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) Peshmerga forces in Tuz Khurmatu, marking the second major assault on PUK positions in two weeks. ISIS also continued low-level attacks in Diyala against the ISF, "Popular Mobilization," and civilians amid provincial officials' public warnings of declining security. Such attacks are likely aimed to destabilize the province and divert ISF and Iranian proxy militia resources away from Anbar. The danger of militias operating in permissive environments was meanwhile illustrated when an unidentified militia kidnapped 12 locals in Dujail, north of Baghdad. The local tribal sheikh's call on the Iraqi government to provide security while also calling on Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq (AAH) for assistance indicated local expectations that Iranian proxy militias will perform a security role rival to that of the Iraqi government.