

# Iraq Situation Report: July 21- 23, 2015

**1 ISF-led operation to secure Haditha:** On July 21, the ISF and tribal fighters attacked Albu Hayat, east of Haditha, from three sides in an effort to secure Haditha, the last major ISF- held city in Anbar, against attacks by ISIS. Seizure of Albu Hayat would also secure the supply route to the nearby Asad Airbase, south of Haditha, another strategically important ISF position. On July 22, the DoD reported two airstrikes “near Haditha,” presumably in support of the ISF operation.



**2 Additional forces deploy around Fallujah without making headway:**

On July 23, the Popular Mobilization media outlet stated that three unidentified battalions arrived at al-Falahat, west of Fallujah.



**3 ISF and Iraqi Sunni fighters prepare for an assault on Ramadi:**

Between July 21 and 23, the ISF, supported by coalition airstrikes, advanced to encircle Ramadi. According to Pentagon officials, 3,000 U.S. trained ISF members and 500 Iraqi Sunni fighters will participate in an upcoming assault on Ramadi



**4 Increase of terror attacks in Baghdad:**

Between July 21 and 22, five Vehicle-borne Improvised Explosive Devices (VBIED) and two Suicide Vest (SVEST) attacks targeted Shi'a civilians and ISF in northeastern, eastern, and southeastern Baghdad killing 22 and injuring 73 others.



**5 ISIS demonstrates reach near Iranian border:** On July 21, a VBIED exploded in a commercial district in the Jisr area, west of Mandali, killing five and injuring 12 others.



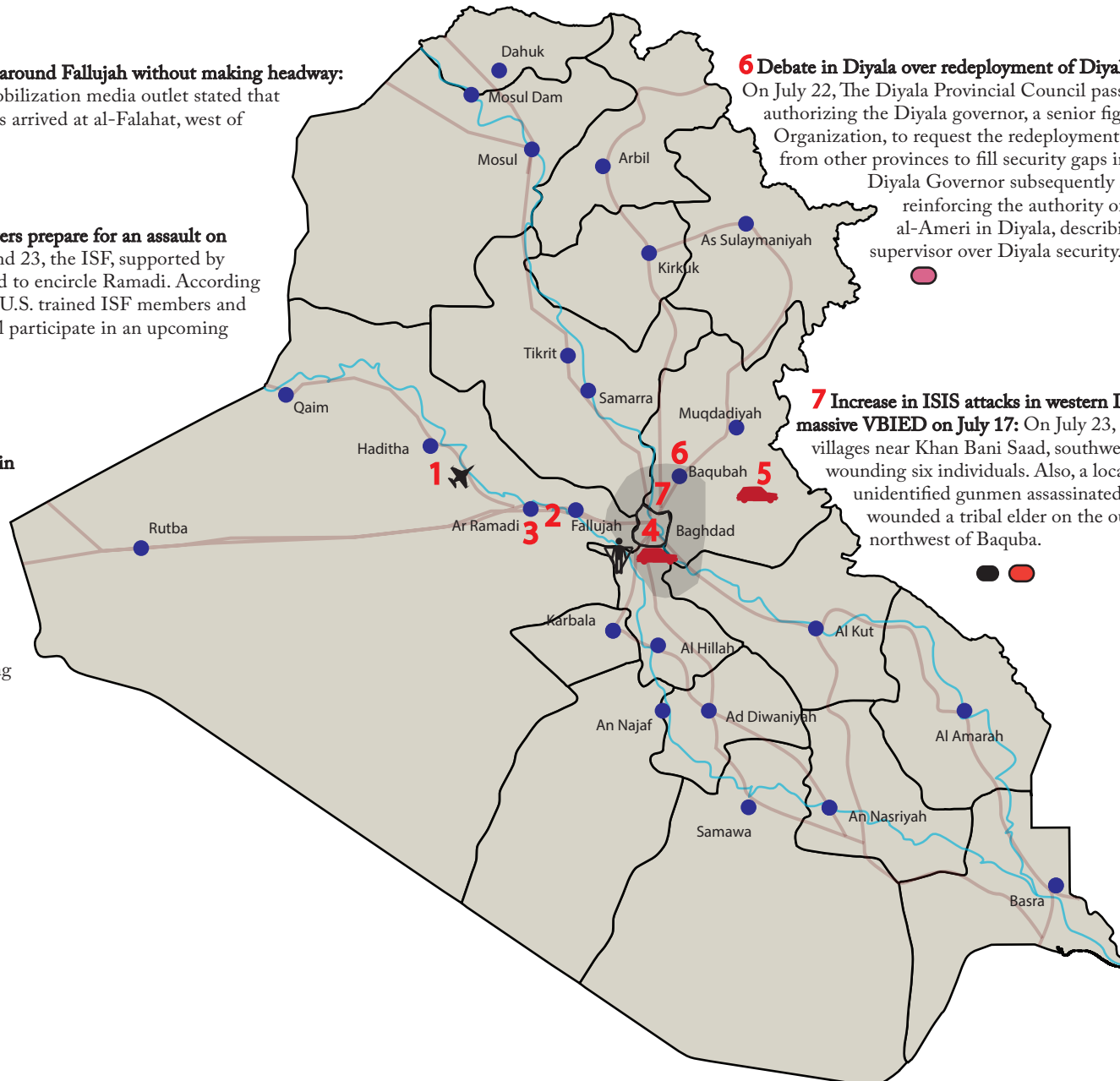
**6 Debate in Diyala over redeployment of Diyala-based security forces:**

On July 22, The Diyala Provincial Council passed a resolution authorizing the Diyala governor, a senior figure in the Badr Organization, to request the redeployment of Diyala-based ISF from other provinces to fill security gaps in Diyala Province. The Diyala Governor subsequently issued a statement reinforcing the authority of Badr leader Hadi al-Ameri in Diyala, describing him as the ultimate supervisor over Diyala security.



**7 Increase in ISIS attacks in western Diyala following the massive VBIED on July 17:**

On July 23, ISIS fired mortars at villages near Khan Bani Saad, southwest of Baquba, wounding six individuals. Also, a local source stated that unidentified gunmen assassinated a civilian and wounded a tribal elder on the outskirts of Khalis, northwest of Baquba.



- Major Cities
- Major Clash
- Iraqi Airstrikes
- Airstrikes
- VBIED
- SVEST
- Coalition
- Anti-ISIS Iraqi Sunni Tribes
- Iraqi Shi'a militias
- Unknown Gunmen
- ISIS

100km

Content: Sinan Adnan and ISW Iraq Team  
Graphics: Evan Sterling



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The recent deterioration of security in Diyala has generated competing requirements for Iranian proxy forces following the deployment of the Badr Organization and other groups into Anbar, their furthest deployment in Sunni areas of Iraq to date. Badr's control over key positions in Diyala and its overall prominence there will likely cause it to feel pressure to address security gaps in Diyala. However, it is unlikely that Badr and the Diyala-based 5th IA Division can redeploy forces to the province without undermining their ongoing operations in Anbar and Salah ad-Din or exposing recaptured areas to counterattacks by ISIS. If security in Diyala continues to deteriorate, it is also possible that Iran's strategic calculus in Iraq could shift to a more aggressive stance, given that Diyala borders Iran, making ISIS in Diyala a direct threat to Iran's interior. Badr has been an Iranian proxy since the 1980s, and Iran may leverage Badr as a solution for Diyala, possibly with support from southern security forces that may be responsive to Badr's influence; however, if Iran's proxies withdraw from Anbar, they will incur a strategic loss given their objective to expand their influence at the expense of the Iraqi government and the U.S.-led coalition. A withdrawal of the Badr Organization from Anbar to protect Diyala may reduce the strength of anti-ISIS forces in Anbar and thereby increase ISIS's chances of repelling ISF counter-offensives in Ramadi in the short-term. However, it may also clear the way for the ISF and U.S.-led coalition to orchestrate a successful campaign fully led by the ISF there. Currently, the ISF and Iraqi Sunni fighters supported by the U.S.-led anti-ISIS coalition are preparing for an assault on Ramadi, the capital city that ISIS seized in May 2015. While ISIS may be attempting to divert ISF and militia attention from Anbar by attacking in Diyala and Baghdad, an unrelenting ISF campaign in Ramadi with U.S. airstrikes and effective command and control of forces may make important progress in the coming weeks.