

Iraq Situation Report: July 28-30, 2015

1 In a positive development toward restoring Sunni confidence in the Iraqi government, Sunni IDPs return to recaptured areas in Salah ad-Din. A Salah ad-Din CoR member stated on July 29 that to date, 8,500 IDP families have returned to Tikrit, Dour, and other areas in northern Salah ad-Din. However, it appears intra-Sunni rivalries have surfaced, as Jubur tribal leaders from Alam, who fought ISIS, are strongly expressing their view that Sunnis from the Albu Ajil tribe not return to their homes near Tikrit. The Jubur cited Albu Ajil support of ISIS near Tikrit as the latter had launched attacks targeting Jubur in nearby Alam.

2 Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) consolidate control over terrain they seized in Ramadi and move toward the center of the city. The ISF established an operations center at Anbar University on July 28. Anbar Operations Command (AOC) forces advanced north of Ramadi on July 28-29 while the Counter Terrorism Service (CTS) cleared neighborhoods south of Ramadi, adjacent to Anbar University. The U.S.-led coalition continues to support the operation as DoD reported nine airstrikes "near Ramadi" on July 28-29. Also, ISIS used two VBIEDs to hinder the southern advance of the ISF, killing ISF members on July 29.

3 Iraqi cabinet condemns Turkish airstrikes and a small scale Kurdish demonstration takes place in an area of major PUK influence. On July 28, the Council of Ministers (CoM) described Turkish airstrikes against the PKK in northern Iraq as an "an assault on Iraqi sovereignty." However, the CoM maintained an opposing stance to attacks against Turkey launched from Iraq. Demonstrators protested against the Turkish airstrikes in Tuz Khurmatu, south of Kirkuk, on July 29, 2015.

4 Iraqi Sunnis at risk of losing political representation in Diyala. The major ruling Shi'a bloc in the Diyala government will send an official request to the Iraqi Sunnis currently boycotting the provincial council asking them to participate in the government by filling positions which the Sunnis consider beneath their political stature.

5 Continued attacks on Diyala civilians amid deteriorating security. Three IEDs detonated at a local soccer field in Abi Saïda, northeast of Baquba on July 28, killing seven civilians and injuring seven others. The area is a potential flash point given the history of AQI and ISIS presence in surrounding villages.



- Major Cities
- ✈ Airstrikes
- 🚗 VBIED
- 👤 Demonstration
- 🇹🇷 Turkey
- 🇮🇷 Coalition
- 🟡 PKK
- 🟢 ISF
- ⬤ ISIS

Content: Sinan Adnan and ISW Iraq Team
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The Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), supported by U.S.-led Coalition airpower, have continued to report advances north and south of Ramadi while simultaneously repelling ISIS's attacks east of the city. ISIS has continued to employ a mobile defense and has deployed SVBIEDs against the ISF south and east of Ramadi, although these attacks have so far failed to reverse the ISF's momentum. As the Iraqi government and ISF remained focused on Anbar, however, attacks by ISIS on civilians continued in Diyala. The Diyala provincial government is also facing a boycott by the Sunni Iraqiyyat Diyala bloc, which is protesting the Badr Organization's control of the governorship. The Sunni deputy governor was recently reinstated, however, a move that could provide an opening to greater Sunni participation in the provincial government. Sunni figures in the Diyala government likely remain wary of Badr intentions in the province. Sunni-Shi'a competition is not the only dynamic that threatens stability in areas recaptured from ISIS. Intra-Sunni and inter-tribal tensions are currently running high in areas recaptured from ISIS, where Sunni communities were divided in terms of whether they resisted or cooperated with ISIS. Near Tikrit, re-captured by the ISF from ISIS, the Juburis of Alam who resisted ISIS are attempting to prevent the return of other Sunnis from the Albu Ajil tribe to their homes on accusations of collaboration with ISIS. Their competition may also reflect emerging power struggles within Salah ad-Din Province. Meanwhile, there has been an unconfirmed report of the visit of an Iranian security delegation, led by Assistant Secretary General of the Iranian National Security Council Ahmad Amiri, to Iraqi Kurdistan to meet with Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), and Gorran (Change) leaders. Such a visit would likely indicate Iranian mediation of the intra-Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) struggle over a proposed transition from a presidential to a parliamentary system. Iran may also be reengaging in Iraqi security in response to ongoing Turkish airstrikes against the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in Iraqi Kurdistan. The Iraqi government, following initial tepid public criticism of Turkish airstrikes against the PKK, has denounced the airstrikes as a matter of principle but has simultaneously recognized Turkey's role in facilitating anti-ISIS operations.