

Iraq Situation Report: July 02 - 06, 2015

1 On July 3, ISIS destroyed the house of Hawija police chief Col. Fattah Yasin al-Khafaji in Barima village, between Kirkuk and Hawija. On July 5, Iraqi Air Force airstrikes destroyed a VBIED factory containing “more than 100 vehicles” and killed a large number of ISIS members, including “explosives experts” in Riyadh sub-district, southwest of Kirkuk on the road linking Kirkuk and Hawija. Between July 3 and July 4, DoD reported two airstrikes “near Hawija.”

2 On July 6, Kirkuk Peshmerga officials stated that ISIS attacked Peshmerga positions in al-Humayra and al-Murra villages, al-Nawafil, al-Shahid complex, the Rashad area, Maktab Khalid, and Miriam Beg south of Kirkuk city. According to a Kirkuk Peshmerga official, 600 ISIS fighters participated in the attack and used multiple SVBIEDs, three of which the Peshmerga destroyed with anti-tank missiles before the SVBIEDs reached their targets. The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) Peshmerga counterterrorism forces commander stated that Peshmerga forces, with U.S.-led Coalition air support, repelled the attack, killing 40 ISIS fighters. A separate report stated that six Peshmerga soldiers were killed and 32 others were wounded during the assault. On July 6 DoD confirmed one airstrike “near Kirkuk”.

3 On July 4, an ISIS SVBIED targeted Zervani forces, a Peshmerga paramilitary force dominated by the Kurdistan Democratic Party, in al-Nuran area, east of Mosul. The Zervani forces destroyed the vehicle, killing the driver, before it reached its target.

4 On July 5, ISIS attacked the ISF on the Haditha-Baiji road with five armored SVBIEDs. The ISF repelled the attack using anti-tank rockets and with Iraqi Air Force air support.

5 On July 5, an anonymous source stated that unknown gunmen killed a PUK official from Qarah Hanjir sub-district, northeast of Kirkuk, in his car in Souq al-Husayr, north of Kirkuk.

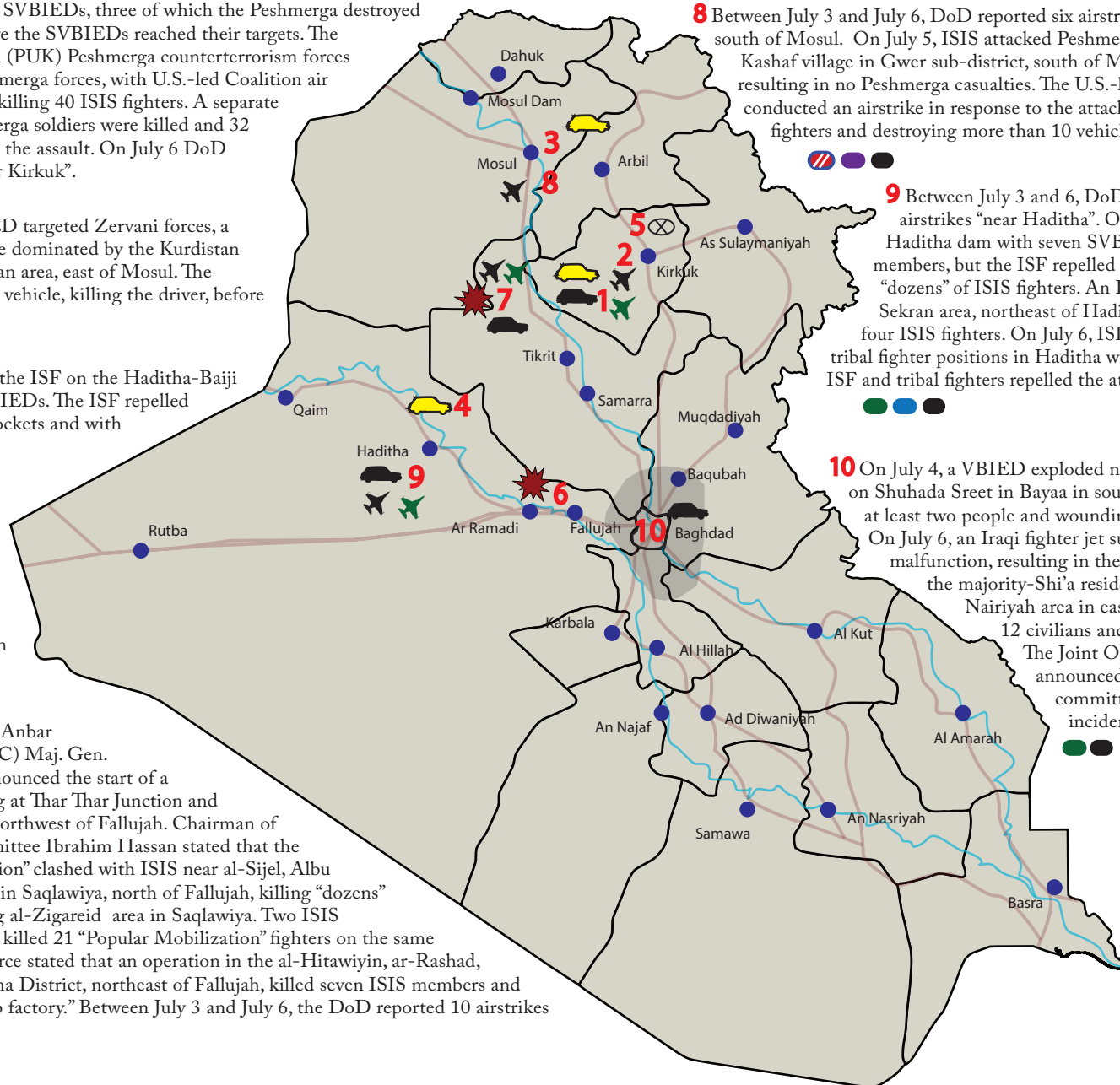
6 On July 5, commander of Anbar Operations Command (AOC) Maj. Gen. Qassim al-Muhammadi announced the start of a military operation beginning at Thar Thar Junction and moving toward Saqlawiya, northwest of Fallujah. Chairman of the Khalidiya security committee Ibrahim Hassan stated that the ISF and “Popular Mobilization” clashed with ISIS near al-Sijel, Albu Shajel, and al-Zigareid area in Saqlawiya, north of Fallujah, killing “dozens” of ISIS fighters and securing al-Zigareid area in Saqlawiya. Two ISIS SVBIEDs north of Fallujah killed 21 “Popular Mobilization” fighters on the same day. On July 6, an AOC source stated that an operation in the al-Hitawiyin, ar-Rashad, and al-Kanatr areas of Garma District, northeast of Fallujah, killed seven ISIS members and destroyed an ISIS “car bomb factory.” Between July 3 and July 6, the DoD reported 10 airstrikes “near Fallujah.”

7 On July 4, ISIS launched two SVBIEDs against the ISF and “Popular Mobilization” in Baiji district, north of Tikrit, killing nine Iraqi Army (IA) soldiers and forcing the ISF and “Popular Mobilization” to withdraw southward from the center of Baiji. ISIS then recaptured Asri and Tamim neighborhoods in Baiji. On July 6, the Ministry of Defense (MoD) reported that IA Aviation strikes killed 10 ISIS fighters in the Albu Juwari area, north of Baiji, and an anonymous security source reported that ISF reinforcements are heading to Baiji from south of Tikrit. Between July 3 and 6, the DoD confirmed three airstrikes “near Baiji.”

8 Between July 3 and July 6, DoD reported six airstrikes “near Makhmur,” south of Mosul. On July 5, ISIS attacked Peshmerga positions near Kashaf village in Gwer sub-district, south of Mosul, with mortars, resulting in no Peshmerga casualties. The U.S.-led Coalition reportedly conducted an airstrike in response to the attack, killing 40 ISIS fighters and destroying more than 10 vehicles.

9 Between July 3 and 6, DoD confirmed five airstrikes “near Haditha”. On July 5, ISIS attacked Haditha dam with seven SVBIEDs, injuring two ISF members, but the ISF repelled the attack, killing “dozens” of ISIS fighters. An IA Aviation strike on the Sekran area, northeast of Haditha reportedly killed four ISIS fighters. On July 6, ISIS attacked ISF and tribal fighter positions in Haditha with six SVBIEDs but the ISF and tribal fighters repelled the attack.

10 On July 4, a VBIED exploded near the Kubaisi mosque on Shuhada Sreet in Bayaa in southern Baghdad, killing at least two people and wounding at least 15 others. On July 6, an Iraqi fighter jet suffered a technical malfunction, resulting in the release of a bomb on to the majority-Shi’a residential neighborhood in Nairiyah area in eastern Baghdad, killing 12 civilians and wounding 25 others. The Joint Operations Command announced the formation of a committee to investigate the incident.



- Major Cities
- ★ Major Clash
- ✈ Airstrikes
- SVBIED
- ✂ Execution
- 🚗 Coalition
- Anti-ISIS Iraqi Sunni Tribes
- Peshmerga
- Iraqi Shi’a militias
- Unknown Gunmen
- ISIS

Content: Sinan Adnan, Theodore Bell, Patrick Martin, and ISW Iraq Team
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ISIS intensified its attacks against the ISF and Iraqi Shi’a militias in northern and western Iraq. In Baiji, northern Salah ad-Din, ISIS launched a successful counter attack that reversed recent gains by Iranian proxy groups, along with a Shi’a armed groups affiliated with the religious establishment of Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani (Hawza), and the Iraqi Special Operations Forces (ISOF) and the Federal Police (FP). Iranian proxy groups led the operation and a failure to hold their recent gains may provide the Iraqi government with an opportunity to bolster ISF support in Baiji and establish dominance over the militias in northern Salah ad Din with the support of U.S. airstrikes. Allocation of resources to counter-offensives across multiple fronts is key for the ISF, however, as ISIS attacked on several other fronts over the last few days. Most notably, ISIS reportedly conducted a major ground attack on areas southwest of Kirkuk city, which is likely to generate a strong Kurdish reaction that may translate to a more offensive posture toward areas controlled by ISIS in southwestern Kirkuk province, from where ISIS likely launched the attack. A previous Kurdish attempt at such an offensive proved insufficient, partially because the area lies beyond Iraqi Kurdish majority territory, and likely because the Peshmerga has insufficient resources to deploy in Kirkuk without exposing other areas to attacks by ISIS. ISIS’s attacks east and south of Mosul may have been probing attacks to test Kurdish response. In the west, the Anbar Operations Command declared a new offensive north of Fallujah, which ISIS attempted to disrupt by deploying SVBIEDs. This comes following an increase in operational tempo over the last four days as militias and ISF made advanced near Fallujah, an area that was recently identified by the leader of Badr Organization as its next objective. However, an operation to recapture Fallujah will most likely face similar challenges as previous operations to recapture cities long controlled by ISIS, such as IED rings and an entrenched enemy in and around the city. In far western Iraq, ISIS launched a major attack targeting the Haditha Dam, which is one of few areas in Anbar that remain under the control of the ISF. Haditha has been a nexus of cooperation between the ISF, Iraqi Sunni fighters, and the U.S.-led Coalition. The Haditha Dam is a significant infrastructure node that likely remains a priority for the ISF to protect. The ISF, the Peshmerga, and anti-ISIS Iraqi tribal fighters also experienced several defensive successes over the reporting period by repelling attacks by ISIS. In Kirkuk, Peshmerga forces used anti-tank rockets to repel ISIS SVBIEDs, a tactical advantage the ISF has also increasingly leveraging positively to repel ISIS SVBIEDs. In Haditha, the ISF and local tribal fighters repelled six SVBIEDs amid continued ISIS pressure on Haditha district and following seven SVBIEDs the previous day. U.S.-led Coalition airstrikes also continue to constitute an important advantage for the ISF. DoD confirmed 10 airstrikes in Fallujah over the reporting period amid heavy clashes and an ISF-declared operation and as well as five airstrikes “near Haditha” amid continued ISIS attacks.