

# Iraq Situation Report: July 07 - 08, 2015

**1** On July 6, Iraqi Army (IA) and Counter-Terrorism Service (CTS) reinforcements arrived in Barwana sub-district, south of Haditha. On July 7, Prime Minister (PM) Abadi ordered the deployment of SWAT reinforcements to Haditha. Also on July 7, Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and tribal fighters, reportedly supported by Iraqi and U.S.-led Coalition air support, attacked ISIS in Barwana and Alus sub-districts, south of Haditha, and destroyed two SVBIEDs in al-Sakran area, northeast of Haditha, before they reached their targets. Albu Nimr and Albu Mahal tribal fighters later repelled a counterattack by ISIS against Barwana. IA Aviation and U.S.-led Coalition airstrikes also reportedly destroyed an ISIS convoy heading from Baiji to Barwana. Between July 6 and 7, the DoD reported eight airstrikes “near Haditha.” On July 8, ISF and tribal fighters repelled an attack by ISIS against Jubba, Barwana, and Alus, south of Haditha, as well as al-Khasfah, west of Haditha, and the “Majid” area, during which 17 tribal fighters were killed.

**2** On July 6, the DoD reported one airstrike “near Hawija,” southwest of Kirkuk. On July 7, a Peshmerga source stated that a U.S.-led Coalition airstrike targeted an ISIS headquarters in Shalikh village in Hawija sub-district, killing 57 ISIS members. On July 8, the ISF detained six ISIS fighters, including two wearing Suicide Vests (SVESTs), who attempted to infiltrate al-Fatha area, north of Baiji from Hawija district.

**3** Between July 6 and 7, the DoD reported four airstrikes “near Sinjar,” west of Mosul. On July 7, Peshmerga, Syrian Kurdish YPG, and Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) forces repelled an attack by ISIS in Sinjar district with the support of unidentified “warplanes,” destroying three VBIEDs and killing 10 ISIS members. A Peshmerga source stated that U.S.-led Coalition airstrikes targeted the Ismail Bek and Sayyida Zeinab areas of Sinjar, killing 11 ISIS members.

**4** Between July 6 and 7, the DoD reported two airstrikes “near Mosul.” On July 7, ISIS reportedly executed six ISIS members in al-Hadhar sub-district, south of Mosul, on charges of cowardice and leaking information to the security forces.

**5** Between July 6 and July 7, the DoD reported three airstrikes “near Fallujah.” On July 7, the MoD stated that the Military Intelligence Directorate conducted rocket strikes against ISIS targets in Fallujah, killing 12 ISIS fighters. On July 8, an SVBIED exploded “near Fallujah,” killing and wounding an unidentified number of ISF members. On July 8, the ISF and “Popular Mobilization” reportedly advanced in Saqlawiya sub-district, north of Fallujah, placing ISIS in Saqlawiya under siege.

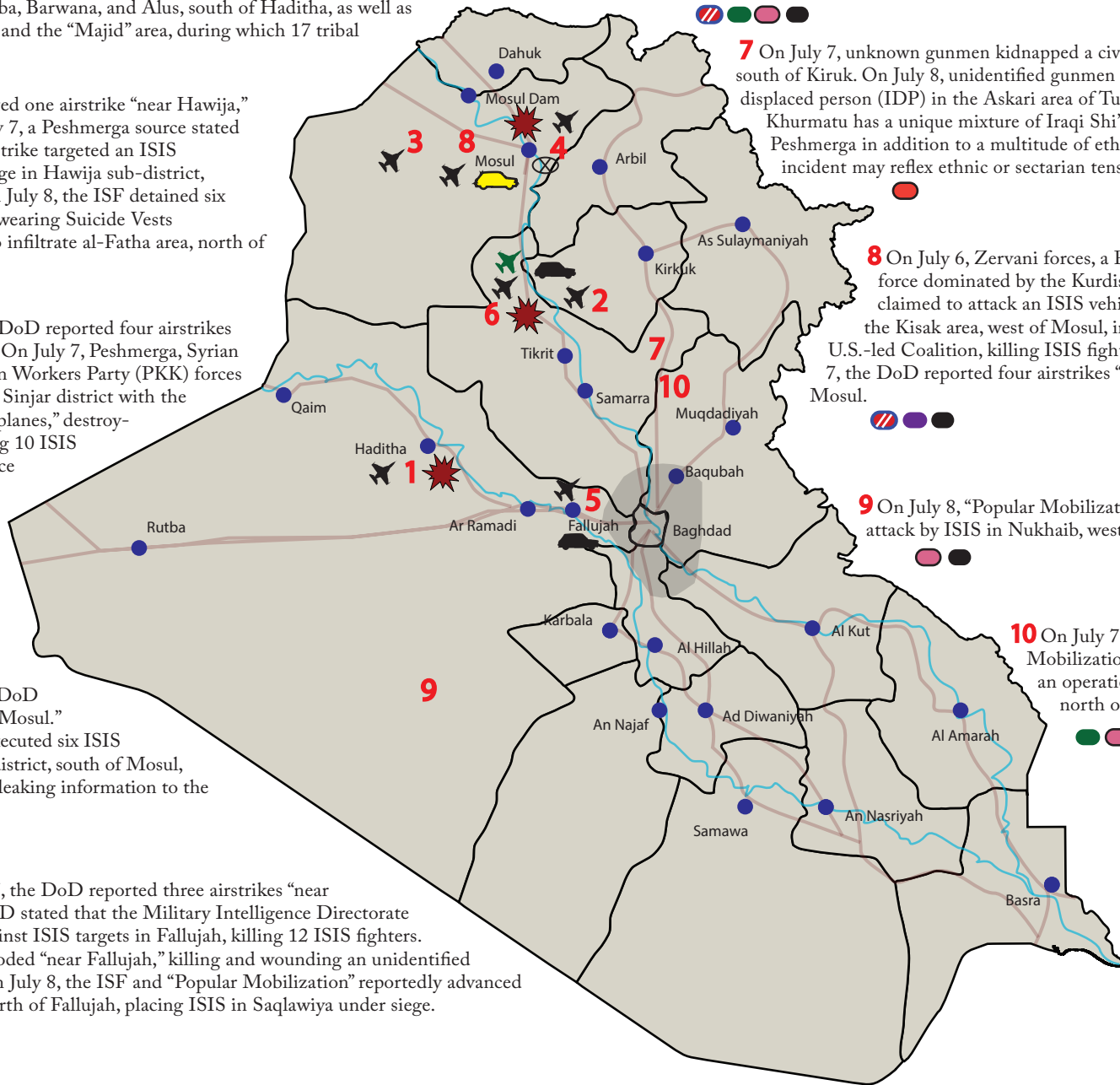
**6** On July 6, the DoD reported one airstrike “near Baiji.” On July 7, one SVBIED exploded in the Baiji Souq area in Baiji district, and two SVBIEDs exploded in the Sakak area west of Baiji, killing ten IA and “Popular Mobilization” members and wounding over 30. Federal Police (FP) and “Popular Mobilization” forces repelled an attack by ISIS at al-Fatha, northeast of Baiji, killing 20 ISIS fighters. On July 8, IA and “Popular Mobilization” reinforcements reportedly arrived in Baiji. Clashes reportedly continue in the Baiji Souq area of Baiji and in the Sakak area, west of Baiji. IA Aviation and the U.S.-led Coalition conducted airstrikes on al-Siniya and al-Sukaria, west of Baiji and on the petrochemical plant, north of Baiji.

**7** On July 7, unknown gunmen kidnapped a civilian in Tuz Khurmatu, south of Kirkuk. On July 8, unidentified gunmen kidnapped an internally displaced person (IDP) in the Askari area of Tuz Khurmatu. Tuz Khurmatu has a unique mixture of Iraqi Shi’a militias and Peshmerga in addition to a multitude of ethnicities and sects. This incident may reflex ethnic or sectarian tension.

**8** On July 6, Zervani forces, a Peshmerga paramilitary force dominated by the Kurdistan Democratic Party, claimed to attack an ISIS vehicle in al-Wa’ili village in the Kisak area, west of Mosul, in coordination with the U.S.-led Coalition, killing ISIS fighters. Between July 6 and 7, the DoD reported four airstrikes “near Tal Afar,” west of Mosul.

**9** On July 8, “Popular Mobilization” fighters repelled an attack by ISIS in Nukhaib, west of Karbala.

**10** On July 7, the ISF and “Popular Mobilization” reportedly launched an operation and cleared MTibja, north of Baquba, of ISIS.



- Major Cities
- SVBIED
- ISF
- Anti-ISIS Iraqi Sunni Tribes
- Major Clash
- Failed S/VBIED
- Peshmerga
- PKK
- Iraqi Airstrikes
- Execution
- Iraqi Shi'a militias
- YPG
- Airstrikes
- Coalition
- Unknown Gunmen
- Volunteers
- ISIS

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

©2015 by the Institute for the Study of War



ISIS continued to launch SVBIED and direct fire attacks against Haditha district in western Anbar, following a SVBIED wave that the ISF largely repelled on July 5-6. The Iraqi government deployed Iraqi Army (IA), Counter-Terrorism Service (CTS), and SWAT reinforcements to Haditha to support the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and tribal fighters, indicating that Haditha remains a priority for the Iraqi government as well as ISIS. Haditha is the last remaining major urban center controlled by the ISF in Anbar Province, and its fall to ISIS would be significant blow to Iraq both symbolically and strategically given the fact that it has withstood numerous historic attacks by ISIS as a result of successful cooperation between the ISF and Iraqi Sunnis. ISW previously forecasted that ISIS would seek to consolidate its control over the Euphrates River Valley during Ramadan, and ISIS's recent attacks on Haditha confirm this expected course of action. ISIS may also have escalated attacks on Haditha in order to accomplish a secondary objective to force the ISF to redeploy to western Anbar Province, thereby offsetting “Popular Mobilization” and ISF operations in Fallujah district. Since May 31, Iranian-backed Iraqi Shi'a militias have increasingly identified Fallujah as their next operational priority alongside Baiji in Salah ad-Din Province. The ISF in Anbar province, namely units that fall under the Anbar Operations Command (AOC) and the Jazeera Badia Operations Command (JBOC), had been operating independently of Shi'a militias until the fall of Ramadi in May 2015, which significantly undermined the AOC. Two simultaneous lines of military effort near Fallujah, one by the Badr Organization and another by the AOC, will demonstrate whether the ISF in Anbar will continue to operate independently. Significant anti-ISIS operations also took place in northern Iraq, especially in Baiji, where ISF and “Popular Mobilization” reinforcements met with renewed attacks by ISIS. Additional anti-ISIS activities by Iraqi Kurdish forces and airstrikes near Mosul and Hawija do not appear to be part of a serious military effort to dislodge ISIS from either area, but rather a reaction to recent offensives by ISIS in Kirkuk Province and scattered attacks against other Kurdish positions. The Peshmerga will not likely advance further, due to a lack of interest in Sunni majority areas controlled by ISIS and a lack of resources. It is important to watch for kinetic engagements near Kisak, northwest of Mosul as they can be indicative of an upcoming attack by ISIS to reclaim the terrain.