

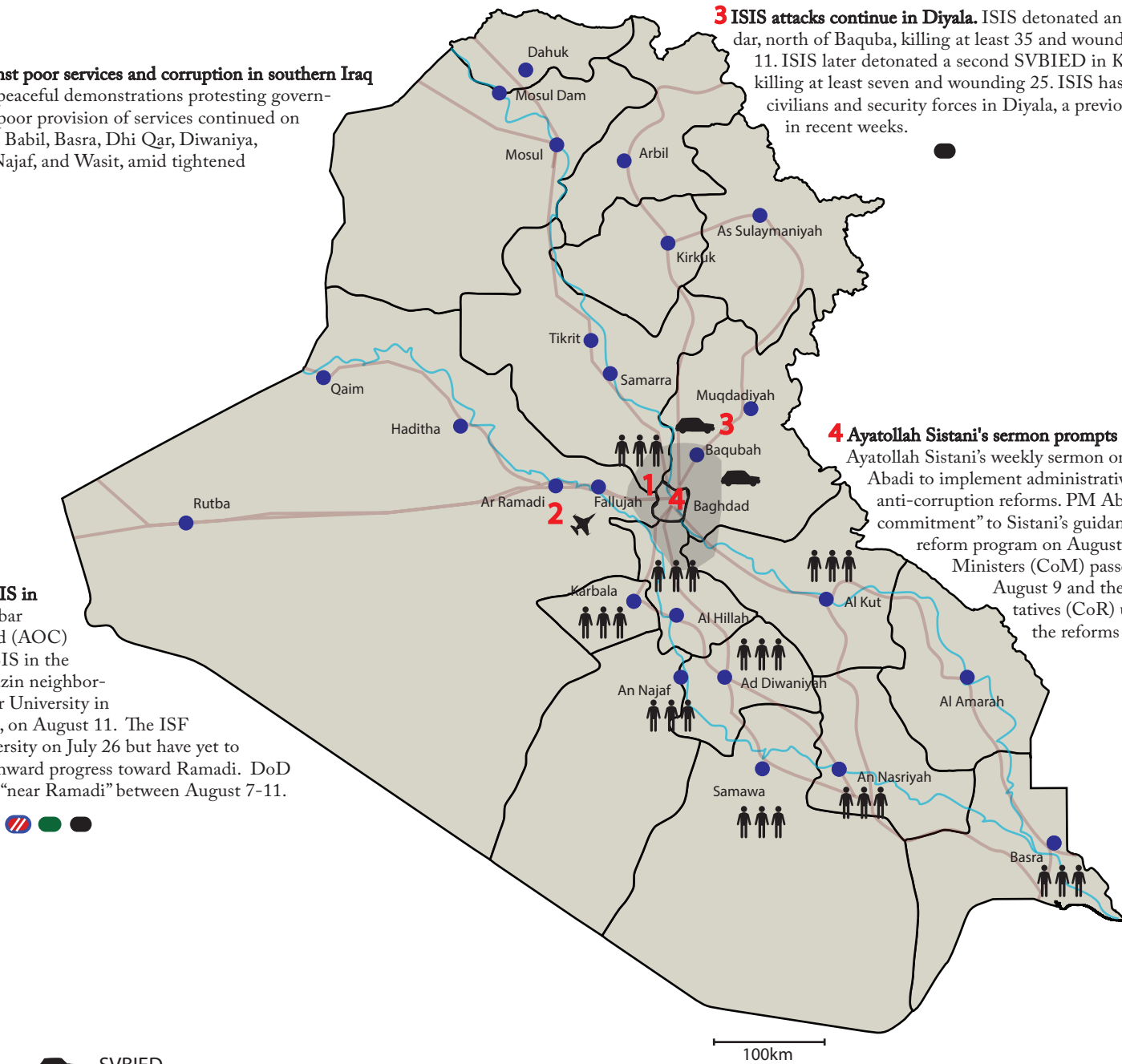
Iraq Situation Report: August 7 - 11, 2015

1 Large protests against poor services and corruption in southern Iraq and Baghdad. Large, peaceful demonstrations protesting government corruption and poor provision of services continued on August 7 in Baghdad, Babil, Basra, Dhi Qar, Diwaniya, Karbala, Muthanna, Najaf, and Wasit, amid tightened security by the ISF.

2 ISF clashes with ISIS in southern Ramadi. Anbar Operations Command (AOC) forces clashed with ISIS in the al-Tamim and Makhazin neighborhoods, north of Anbar University in southwestern Ramadi, on August 11. The ISF captured Anbar University on July 26 but have yet to make significant northward progress toward Ramadi. DoD reported 12 airstrikes "near Ramadi" between August 7-11.

3 ISIS attacks continue in Diyala. ISIS detonated an SVBIED in Huwaydar, north of Baquba, killing at least 35 and wounding over 70 on August 11. ISIS later detonated a second SVBIED in Kanan, east of Baquba, killing at least seven and wounding 25. ISIS has increased attacks on civilians and security forces in Diyala, a previous ISIS control zone, in recent weeks.

4 Ayatollah Sistani's sermon prompts reform initiative. Ayatollah Sistani's weekly sermon on August 7 urged PM Abadi to implement administrative, financial, and anti-corruption reforms. PM Abadi stated his "full commitment" to Sistani's guidance and announced a reform program on August 9. The Council of Ministers (CoM) passed the reform bill on August 9 and the Council of Representatives (CoR) unanimously approved the reforms on August 11.



- Major Cities
- ★ Major Clash
- ✈ Airstrikes
- 🚗 SVBIED
- 👤 Demonstration
- 🚫 Coalition
- 🟢 ISF
- ⬛ ISIS

Content: Theodore Bell and ISW Iraq Team
 Graphics: Evan Sterling
 ©2015 by the Institute for the Study of War



Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani's landmark August 7 sermon has provided PM Abadi with a mandate to embark on administrative, financial, and anti-corruption reforms. Ayatollah Sistani's reform directive followed over a week of popular demonstrations in Baghdad and across southern Iraq over service shortages and government corruption and has bolstered PM Abadi's position against political rivals. The Council of Ministers (CoM) and Council of Representatives (CoR) have unanimously passed the bill and the U.S. State Department has commended PM Abadi's initiative. The reform bill mandates, among other reforms, the removal of the three vice presidencies and deputy premierships, a step that likely seeks to reduce the political prominence of former PM and current VP Nouri al-Maliki, who has continually undermined the Iraqi government since he reluctantly ceded the premiership to Abadi in August 2014. It will remain important, going forward, to monitor how the southern provincial governments react to the reforms in light of the August 5 enactment of the Provincial Powers Act and given that PM Abadi's and VP Maliki's State of Law Alliance (SLA) hold many of the southern governorships and provincial council chairs. Security will also remain a persistent issue in southern Iraq in light of the deployment of many ISF units to priority fronts in northern and western Iraq.

ISIS has continued to exploit security gaps in Diyala Province, including two high casualty SVBIEDs on August 10. ISIS likely intends to provoke a deployment of the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) to Diyala and away from Ramadi, where the ISF launched operations to "liberate Anbar" on July 13. ISIS also likely seeks to divert the Iranian-backed Badr Organization to Diyala from Fallujah, where it has been conducting isolating operations east of Ramadi. ISF-led Ramadi operations are ongoing, and the ISF recaptured Anbar University on July 26; however, as of August 11, four weeks into the announced operation, the ISF has failed to make inroads in Ramadi city itself. By contrast, the ISF liberated Tikrit on April 1 after four weeks of anti-ISIS operations.