

Iraq Situation Report: September 9 - 10, 2015

1 PM dismisses senior ministerial officials. On September 9, as part of ongoing reform efforts, PM Haidar al-Abadi dismissed 123 senior officials in several ministries and stated that others would be dismissed later. The dismissals targeted officials within ministries who would be responsible for implementing reforms within their departments.

2 Demonstration organizing body suspends work, denounces secular demonstration leaders. On September 10, the "Civil Mobilization," a protest group operating in Baghdad and connected to Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq, announced the suspension of its participation in protests until further notice. A spokesperson stated that other protest leaders were receiving foreign financial support, used "un-Islamic slogans," and were preventing protest leaders from reaching an agreement on the specific demands of the demonstrations. He accused "foreign actors" of attempting to draw attention away from the "Popular Mobilization" through the demonstrations.

3 ISF clash with ISIS in southern Ramadi. On September 9-10, ISF and tribal fighters conducted operations in the vicinity of Tamim neighborhood in southwestern Ramadi. The Anbar deputy provincial chairman was wounded by a sniper in Humaira area of southern Ramadi. Clashes also continued east of Ramadi. DoD announced three airstrikes "near" Ramadi and Habaniya.

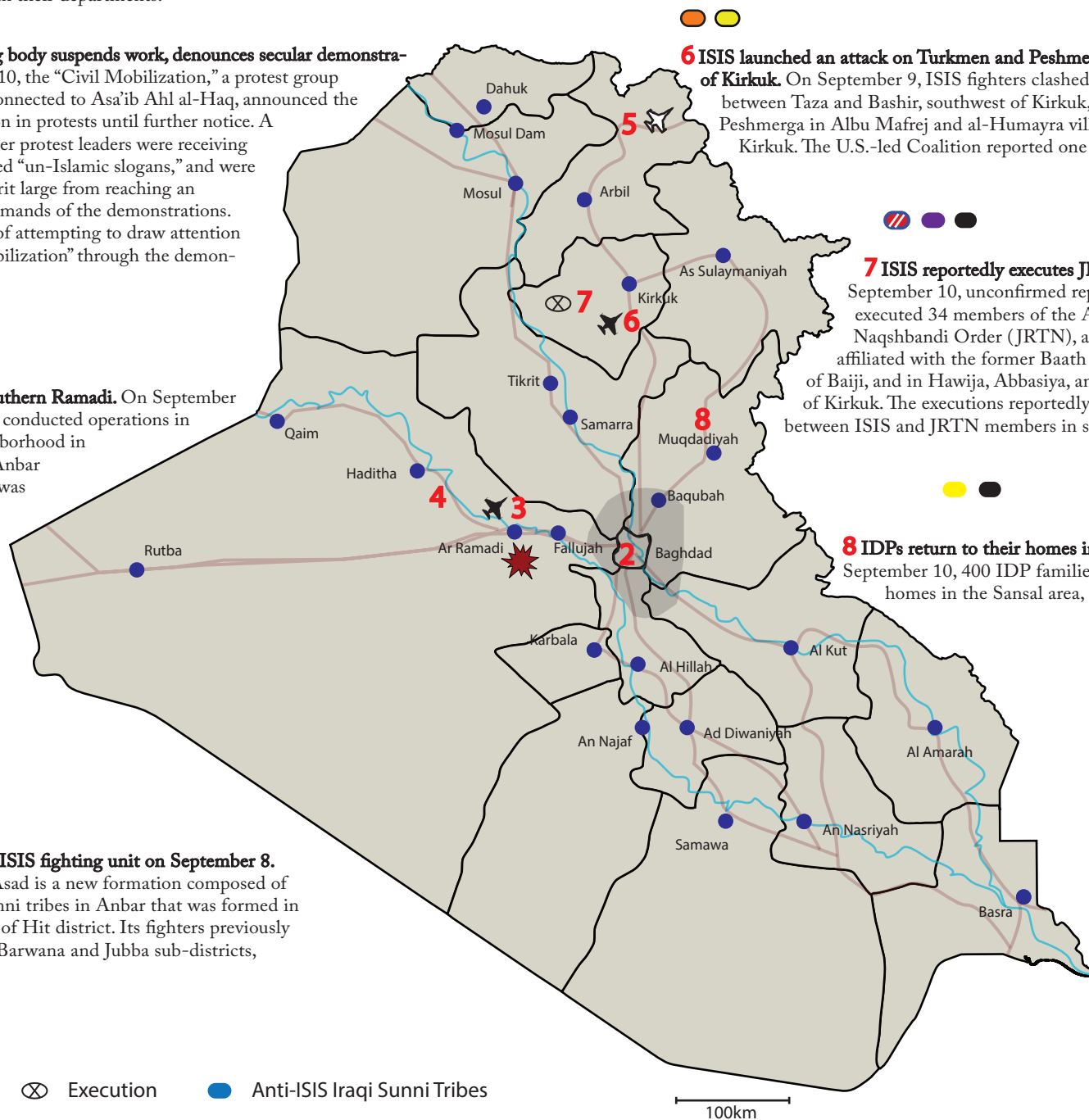
4 Tribal fighters form anti-ISIS fighting unit on September 8. The 1,100-strong Liwa al-Asad is a new formation composed of tribal fighters from four Sunni tribes in Anbar that was formed in Baghdadi sub-district, west of Hit district. Its fighters previously fought alongside the IA in Barwana and Jubba sub-districts, south of Haditha.

5 Turkish airstrikes continue in northern Iraq. On September 9, witnesses stated that Turkish airstrikes targeting the PKK struck villages in the Qandil Mountains in northern Arbil.

6 ISIS launched an attack on Turkmen and Peshmerga positions southwest of Kirkuk. On September 9, ISIS fighters clashed with Turkmen fighters between Taza and Bashir, southwest of Kirkuk, and attacked Peshmerga in Albu Mafrej and al-Humayra villages, southwest of Kirkuk. The U.S.-led Coalition reported one airstrike "near Kirkuk."

7 ISIS reportedly executes JRTN members. On September 10, unconfirmed reports stated that ISIS executed 34 members of the Army of the Men of the Naqshbandi Order (JRTN), a militant group affiliated with the former Baath Party, in Sharqat, north of Baiji, and in Hawija, Abbasiya, and Zab areas, southwest of Kirkuk. The executions reportedly followed clashes between ISIS and JRTN members in southwestern Kirkuk.

8 IDPs return to their homes in Diyala province. On September 10, 400 IDP families returned to their homes in the Sansal area, north of Muqdadiah.



- Major Cities
- ⊗ Execution
- Anti-ISIS Iraqi Sunni Tribes
- ★ Major Clash
- ▨ Coalition
- JRTN
- ✈ Airstrikes
- ISF
- PKK
- Iraqi Shi'a militias
- Peshmerga
- Turkey
- ISIS

Content: Patrick Martin and ISW Iraq Team
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PM Haidar al-Abadi continues to take actions to ensure that the government implements his reform agenda. PM Abadi announced that he dismissed 123 senior officials within a large number of ministries, all of whom held positions that are important in implementing centrally-directed policy within their respective ministerial departments. An initial review of the dismissed officials does not point to the reduction in interests of any particular party. Rather, this round of reforms appears to focus upon eliminating patronage and improving performance within the ministries. Substantive reforms will likely perpetuate demonstrators' support for PM Abadi and limit that of his rivals, maintaining PM Abadi's momentum against challengers while Iranian-backed militias take steps to block legislation, to pressure the Judiciary and the Presidency, and to challenge ISF control in Baghdad. A protest group in Baghdad affiliated with Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq, an Iranian proxy militia, denounced the leaders of the largely-secular protests and announced the suspension of its participation in the demonstrations on September 10. The announcement indicates that PM Abadi's rivals participated in demonstrations and are willing to distance themselves from the movement in a bid to disrupt PM Abadi's momentum or capture it for their own political ends. Meanwhile, the ISF continued limited forays into Ramadi from the south. ISF operations near Ramadi did not achieve new gains this week, but their operations indicate that the ISF has not reduced its primary focus upon Ramadi in response to other security threats across Iraq. A number of attacks by ISIS on Peshmerga positions in Kirkuk indicates that ISIS maintains sufficient capabilities in Kirkuk to harass Peshmerga defenses and probe for exploitable weaknesses.