

# Iraq Situation Report: September 22 - 25, 2015

**1 Heavy Coalition airstrikes against ISIS in Mosul.** Between September 21-25, 31 Coalition airstrikes targeted ISIS “near Mosul” and “near Kisik,” west of Mosul. The extent of the damage could not be verified.



**2 ISIS conducts internal crackdown in Ninewa.** On September 23, ISIS executed 25 former security forces members in Mosul for unspecified reasons, and five IP members in Qayarah, south of Mosul, for collaborating with Ninewa Operations Command.



**3 Baiji stalemate continues.** On September 24, Federal Police repelled an ISIS attack on an Iraqi defensive line in Tel Abu Jirad, west of Baiji, killing 14 ISIS fighters and destroying two VBIEDs and an excavator VBIED. Between September 22 - 25, six Coalition airstrikes targeted ISIS “near Baiji.”



**4 Unconfirmed reports of Russian, Syrian, and Iranian “coordination cell” in Baghdad.** An anonymous senior American official stated a joint Russian-Syrian-Iranian operations center in Baghdad, staffed by “low-level Russian generals,” will facilitate coordination with Iranian-backed Iraqi Shi’a militias. An unconfirmed report stated that IRGC Quds Force Commander Qassim Suleimani met with Russian officials during a recent visit to Baghdad on September 22. The Iraqi Foreign Minister denied knowledge of any Russian military presence in Iraq.



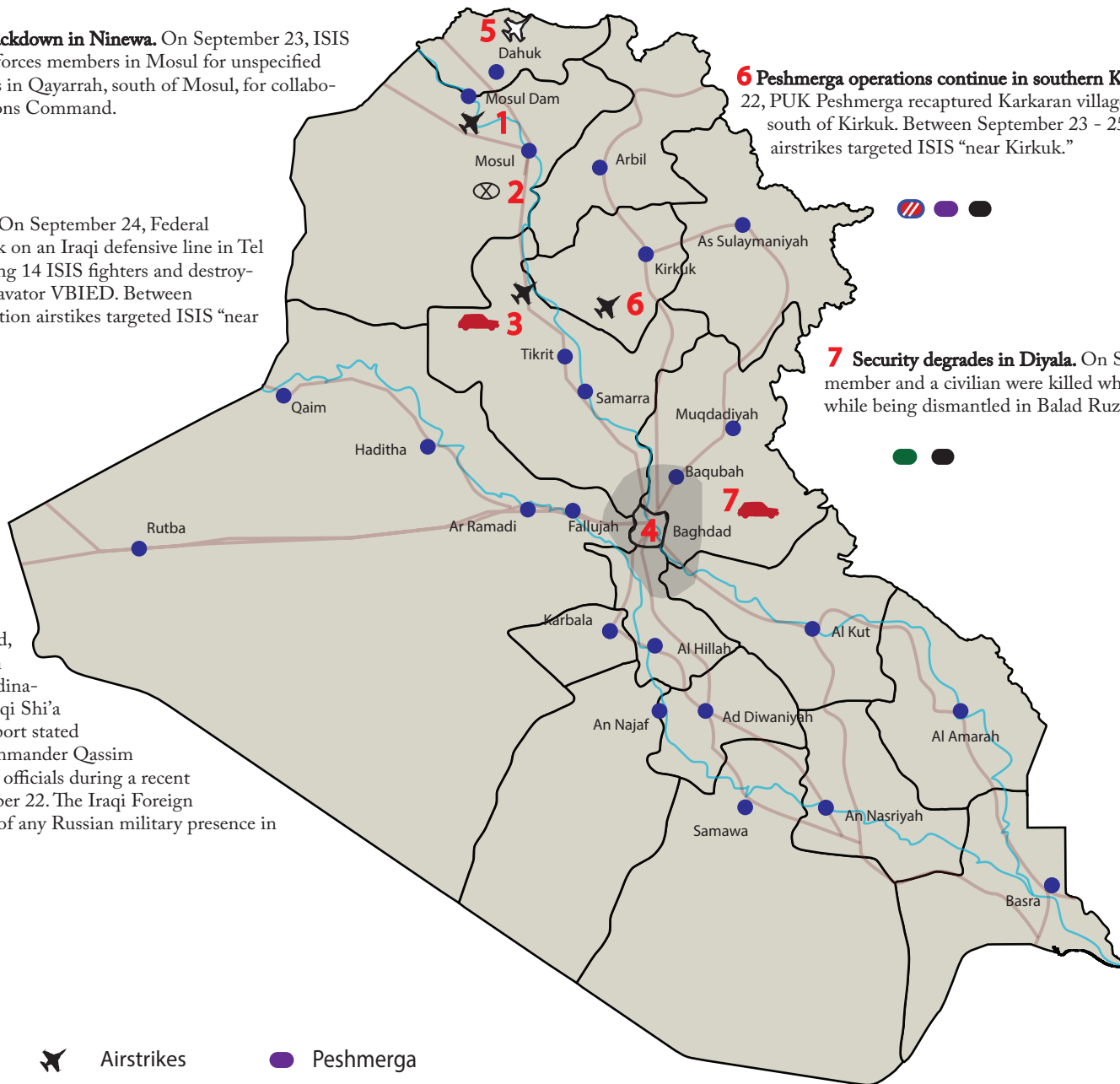
**5 Turkish aircraft target PKK in northern Iraq.** On September 23, Turkey conducted airstrikes on PKK positions and ammunition depots in two villages in northern Dohuk.



**6 Peshmerga operations continue in southern Kirkuk.** On September 22, PUK Peshmerga recaptured Karkaran village in Daquq district, south of Kirkuk. Between September 23 - 25, four Coalition airstrikes targeted ISIS “near Kirkuk.”



**7 Security degrades in Diyala.** On September 23, an IP member and a civilian were killed when a VBIED exploded while being dismantled in Balad Ruz, east of Baquba.



- Major Cities
- ✈ Airstrikes
- Peshmerga
- ⊗ Execution
- ISF
- Anti-ISIS Iraqi Sunni Tribes
- 🚗 VBIED
- 🚀 Coalition
- PKK
- ✈ Turkish Airstrikes
- Turkey
- Iraqi Shi'a militias
- ISIS

100km

Content: Patrick Martin, Logan Brog, and ISW Iraq Team  
Graphics: Evan Sterling



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An anonymous senior U.S. official stated that “low-level Russian generals” had established a “coordination cell” in Baghdad with Syrian and Iranian military commanders to coordinate the activities of Iranian-backed Iraqi Shi’a militias in Iraq. The report, which is unconfirmed, comes as Russia rapidly increases its presence at the Istamo weapons facility and al-Assad airport in Latakia in western Syria. Russia is seeking to thwart U.S. policy in the region and undermine its ability to direct the anti-ISIS campaign and to force the U.S. to accept Iran and the Syrian regime as essential allies in the fight against ISIS. Russia’s potential involvement in Iraq, like Russia’s presence in Syria, comes at the invitation of Iran, who through proxy militias has lately been challenging Iraqi PM Abadi’s security and political leadership. If Russian involvement in Iraq grows to include capacity for long range airstrikes commensurate with its growing footprint in Syria, Russian air power would compete directly with U.S. air support. Meanwhile U.S.-led Coalition airstrikes have increased markedly in the vicinity of Mosul and as the Coalition continues to prioritize efforts to support the ISF’s efforts to recapture Ramadi.