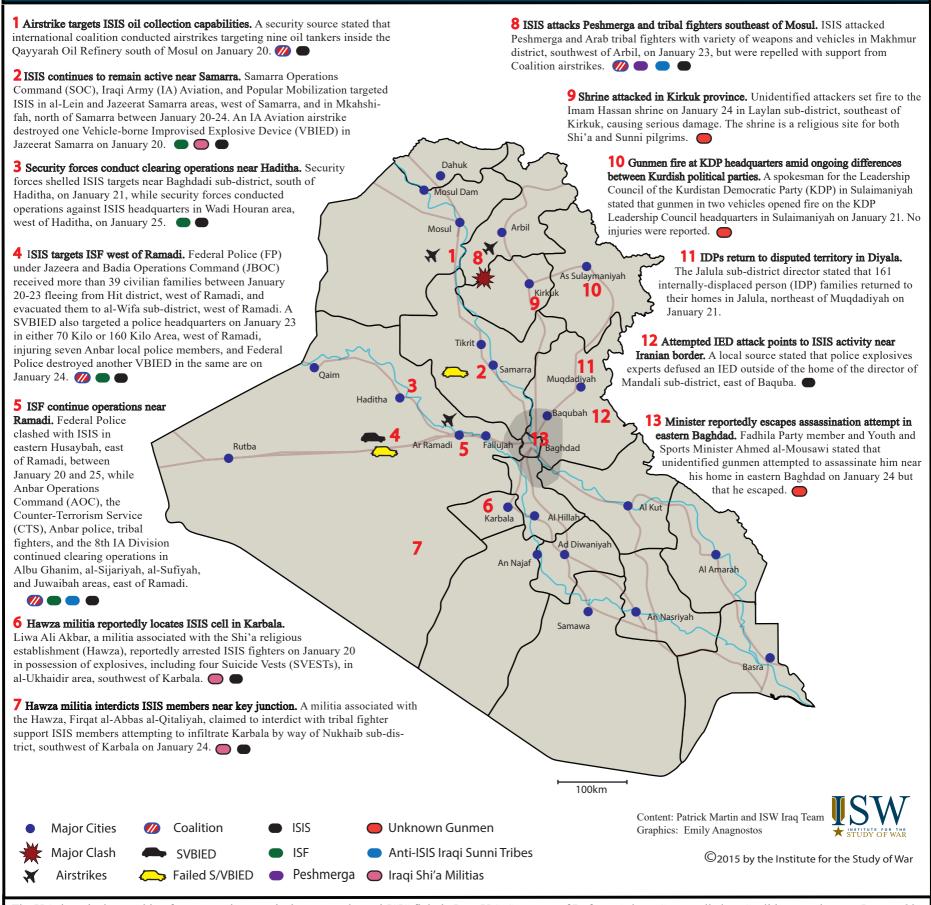
Iraq Situation Report: January 20 - 25, 2016



The U.S. is actively searching for ways to increase its impact on the anti-ISIS fight in Iraq. U.S. Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter called on Coalition members on January 22 to increase the amount of support they provide, and the U.S. indicated plans to intensify its own assistance for anti-ISIS actors in Iraq. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Joseph Dunford stated that the U.S. was exploring the option to embed U.S. advisers with Iraqi units at bases and outposts in northern Iraq for a future operation to recapture Mosul. Operation Inherent Resolve Spokesperson Col. Steve Warren stated that the new advisers would total "hundreds" at most to advise and assist Peshmerga and Iraqi Security Forces in recapturing Mosul. Meanwhile, U.S. Ambassador Stuart Jones discussed the possibility of increasing Coalition airstrikes with the Iraqi Ministry of Defense while offering adviser support for the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) to assist with the KRG's ongoing financial crisis. Intensified anti-ISIS efforts are necessary to destroy ISIS safe havens and regain territory in Iraq. Increased U.S. support for the ISF and Kurdish partners is also essential to help Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi resist pressure from Iranian proxies who seek to reduce the Coalition's role in the anti-ISIS fight. Now is an opportune time to for the U.S. to bolster support for the Iraqi government, as many Iranian proxy militias have shifted a large number of their fighters from Iraq to Syria and have diminished capabilities in Iraq as a result.