

1 Kurdish militias recapture border crossing area with Syria. An Iraqi Army statement noted that Yazidi and tribal fighters recaptured Umm al-Dhiban and Umm Jaris areas, west of Sinjar by the Iraq-Syria border on March 25. ISIS claimed on March 26 that ISIS attackers detonated a Suicide Vehicle-borne Improvised Explosive Device (SVBIED) and eight House-borne IED (HBIED) in Umm al-Dhiban, killing "54" Kurdish fighters.



10 ISIS attacks western Anbar airbase with SVESTs. Up to five ISIS attackers wearing SVESTs broke into Ayn al-Asad Airbase, west of Baghdad sub-district, on March 26. ISIS claimed that three attackers detonated SVESTs in the base while two others attacked Iraqi Army soldiers and burned a helicopter.



9 Operations to recapture Hit District delayed. Operations to clear Hit District, west of Ramadi, were delayed due to the large number of IEDs, the presence of civilians used as human shields, and inclement weather. However, forces from the 7th IA Division, Emergency Police, Federal Police (FP), tribal fighters, and the Counter-Terrorism Service (CTS) recaptured Kubaisa sub-district, west of Hit District, from ISIS with "significant" Coalition airstrike support on March 25.



8 Sadr begins personal sit-in in the Green Zone as supporters demonstrate across southern Iraq. Sadrist Trend leader Muqtada al-Sadr began a sit-in in a tent in the Green Zone on March 27 in order to pressure the government into conducting a cabinet reshuffle. The Council of Representatives gave PM Abadi until March 31 to submit names for the new cabinet. Meanwhile, Sadr's supporters continued their sit-in in front of the gates to the Green Zone while thousands of his supporters demonstrated across southern Iraq on March 28 in support of Sadr's personal sit-in.

7 SVEST attacker interdicted south of Baghdad. Baghdad Operations Command (BOC) stated on March 27 that the National Security Service with BOC arrested an attacker with an SVEST attempting to attack the Green Zone sit-in site in Yusufiyah, south of Baghdad.



2 Turkish soldier killed at base near Mosul. The Turkish military stated on March 26 that ISIS launched rockets at the Bashiqa base that houses Turkish forces northeast of Mosul, killing one Turkish soldier and wounding one other.



3 Security forces announce start to Ninewa operations. The Defense Ministry announced the beginning of operations to recapture Ninewa on March 24, recapturing villages west of Makhmur District, southwest of Arbil. Operations began on three axes with the participation of the 71st Brigade of the 15th Iraqi Army Division, Peshmerga, Popular Mobilization, and tribal fighters. Coalition airstrikes and artillery from a U.S. Marine firebase supported the operation. However, ISIS launched a VBIED against IA forces on March 25, killing and wounding an unspecified number of soldiers, and shelled security forces with mortars. Also, a Western reporter stated that IA soldiers fled during operations to recapture the village of al-Nasr, west of Makhmour. The 71st Brigade engaged in ongoing clashes with ISIS in al-Nasr on March 28.

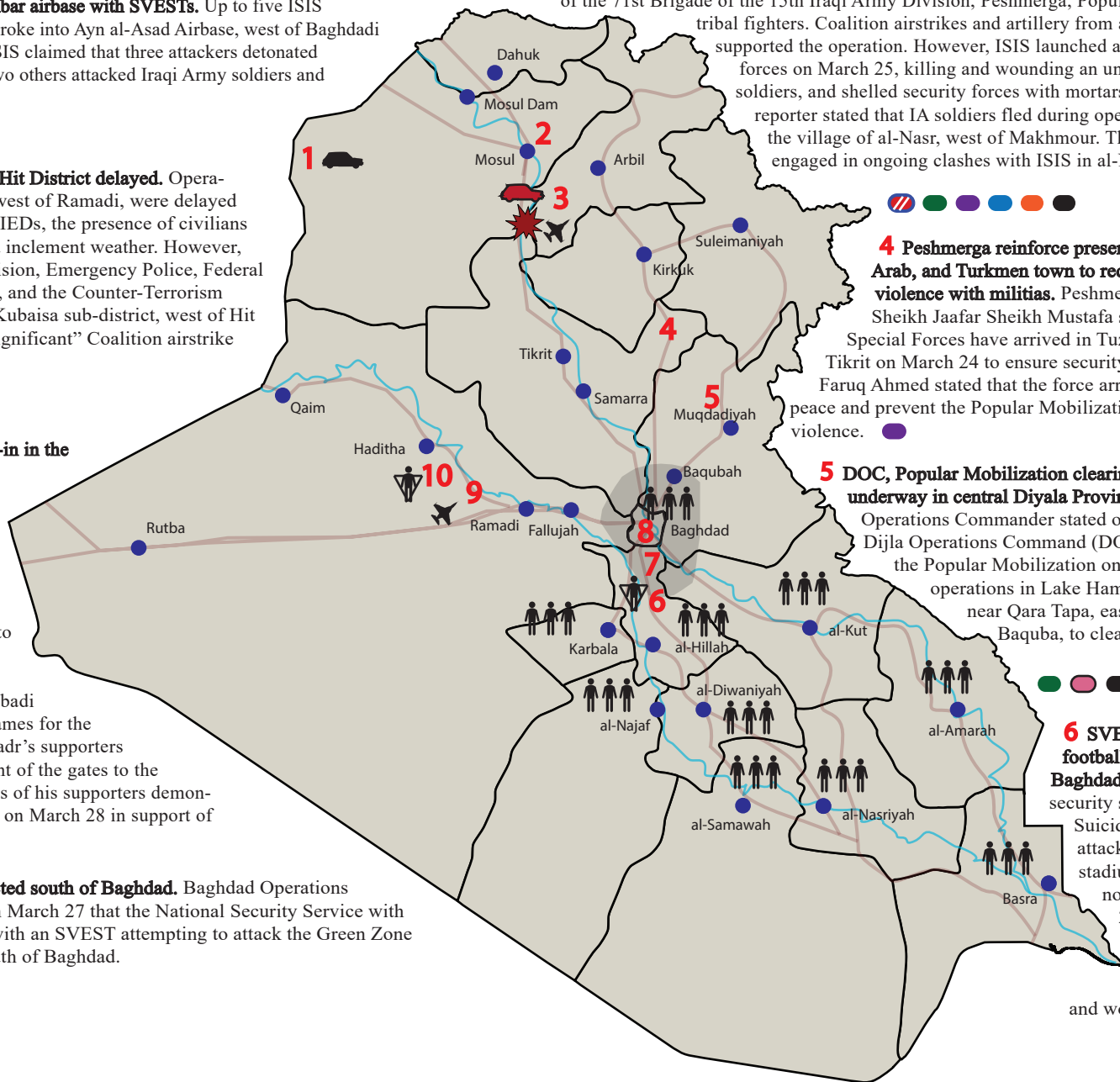


4 Peshmerga reinforce presence in mixed Kurd, Arab, and Turkmen town to reduce possibility of violence with militias. Peshmerga Commander Sheikh Jaafar Sheikh Mustafa stated that Peshmerga Special Forces have arrived in Tuz Khurmato, east of Tikrit on March 24 to ensure security. Tuz Police Chief Faruq Ahmed stated that the force arrived to establish peace and prevent the Popular Mobilization from starting any violence.

5 DOC, Popular Mobilization clearing operations underway in central Diyala Province. The Dijla Operations Commander stated on March 22 that the Dijla Operations Command (DOC) is working with the Popular Mobilization on "large-scale" military operations in Lake Hamrin, al-Khalauia, and near Qara Tapa, east and north-east of Baquba, to clear ISIS from the area.



6 SVEST attack strikes football stadium south of Baghdad. An unnamed security source stated that an Suicide Vest (SVEST) attack targeted a football stadium in al-Iskanderiya, north of Hilla on March 25. ISIS has claimed responsibility for the attack, which killed 26 people and wounded 71 others.



- Major Cities
- 🚒 Coalition
- 👤 Peshmerga
- 🇹🇷 Turkey
- 👤 Yazidi Volunteers
- 🔥 Major Clash
- 🟢 ISF
- 👤 Anti-ISIS Iraqi Sunni Tribes
- 🟡 PKK
- 🚗 SVBIED
- 👤 SVEST
- ✈️ Airstrikes
- ⬛ ISIS
- 👤 Iraqi Shi'a Militias
- 🟠 Volunteers
- 🚗 VBIED
- 👤 Demonstration

Content: Patrick Martin and ISW Iraq Team
Graphics: Emily Anagnostos

©2016 by the Institute for the Study of War

Pressure continues to mount on Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi to reshuffle the cabinet. Sadrist Trend leader Muqtada al-Sadr gave PM Abadi until March 26 to submit the list of nominations for the new cabinet to the Council of Representatives (CoR). However, discussions underway in the pan-Shi'a political body, the National Alliance, over what positions blocs will retain in the new government stalled the reshuffle process, and PM Abadi missed the deadline as a result. In response, Sadr initiated his own sit-in inside of a tent in the Green Zone on March 27 to pressure PM Abadi to conduct reforms, refusing to meet with politicians and government officials. Political blocs meanwhile have pressured PM Abadi to conduct reforms to their own preferences, seeking to preserve their positions and increase their representation within the cabinet. Groups like the Sunni Etihad and the Kurdistan Alliance refused to submit nominations for the new cabinet positions, citing concerns over the unclear selection process. Meanwhile, the National Alliance decided on March 27 to form a new sub-committee aimed at "advising" PM Abadi during the cabinet reshuffle process. However, the presence of Badr Organization leader Hadi al-Amiri and Popular Mobilization Commission Chairman Faleh al-Fayadh on the committee indicate that Iranian proxies are attempting to direct the final outcome of the cabinet reshuffle, an outcome that would undermine the U.S.'s ability to continue its advise-and-assist mission in Iraq and effectively combat ISIS. PM Abadi is being pulled in multiple directions by Sadr, pro-Iranian elements, and non-Shi'a political blocs in a way that makes it impossible to satisfy all parties involved. It is a distinct possibility that multiple political blocs will reject PM Abadi's cabinet submission on Thursday, or that he may not be able to submit it at all, given the disparate demands of the political blocs. PM Abadi may thus face the real possibility of a questioning session and a subsequent vote of no-confidence if the reform process continues to stall.