

1 **PKK-linked Yazidi militia opens training camp in Sinjar.** “Hundreds” of Yazidi Kurdish fighters arrived at a training center in Sinjar District, west of Mosul, on April 6 to begin military training at a camp run by the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK)-linked Yazidi Protection Forces (YBS). Sinjar mayor Mahma Khalil stated that he rejected the new camp. A PKK leader stated that the PKK would remain in Sinjar until the recapture of all Yazidi areas and of Mosul.

2 **Ninewa Operations halt amid stiff resistance.** The Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) destroyed an unverifiable number of Vehicle-borne Improvised Explosive Devices (VBIEDs) and continued clashes with ISIS in the vicinity of the village of al-Nasr, west of Makhmur, amid heavy Coalition airstrikes and Iraqi Army (IA) shelling of ISIS targets. The Ninewa Operations Commander stated on April 6 that operations will be postponed until reinforcements arrive to hold recaptured territory.

9 **ISF reach central Hit District.** The 73rd Brigade of the 16th IA Division and the Counter-Terrorism Service (CTS) reached central Hit District, west of Ramadi, and raised the Iraqi flag over buildings in the town center, including the mayoral building on April 11. Senior Ministry of Defense officials received fleeing civilians in Kubaisa, west of Hit. The CTS Commander stated that efforts to clear Hit have been deliberately slow to maintain territorial gains, reduce casualties from IEDs, and ensure that ISIS fighters do not escape.

3 **U.S. ponders additional firebases in northern Iraq.** Rear. Adm. Andrew Lewis, the Joint Staff’s Vice Director for Operations, stated on April 6 that the U.S. is considering building up to three temporary bases on the north-south route between central Iraq and Mosul to “accelerate the campaign against ISL.” The bases would advise the ISF and provide logistics and ground fire support.

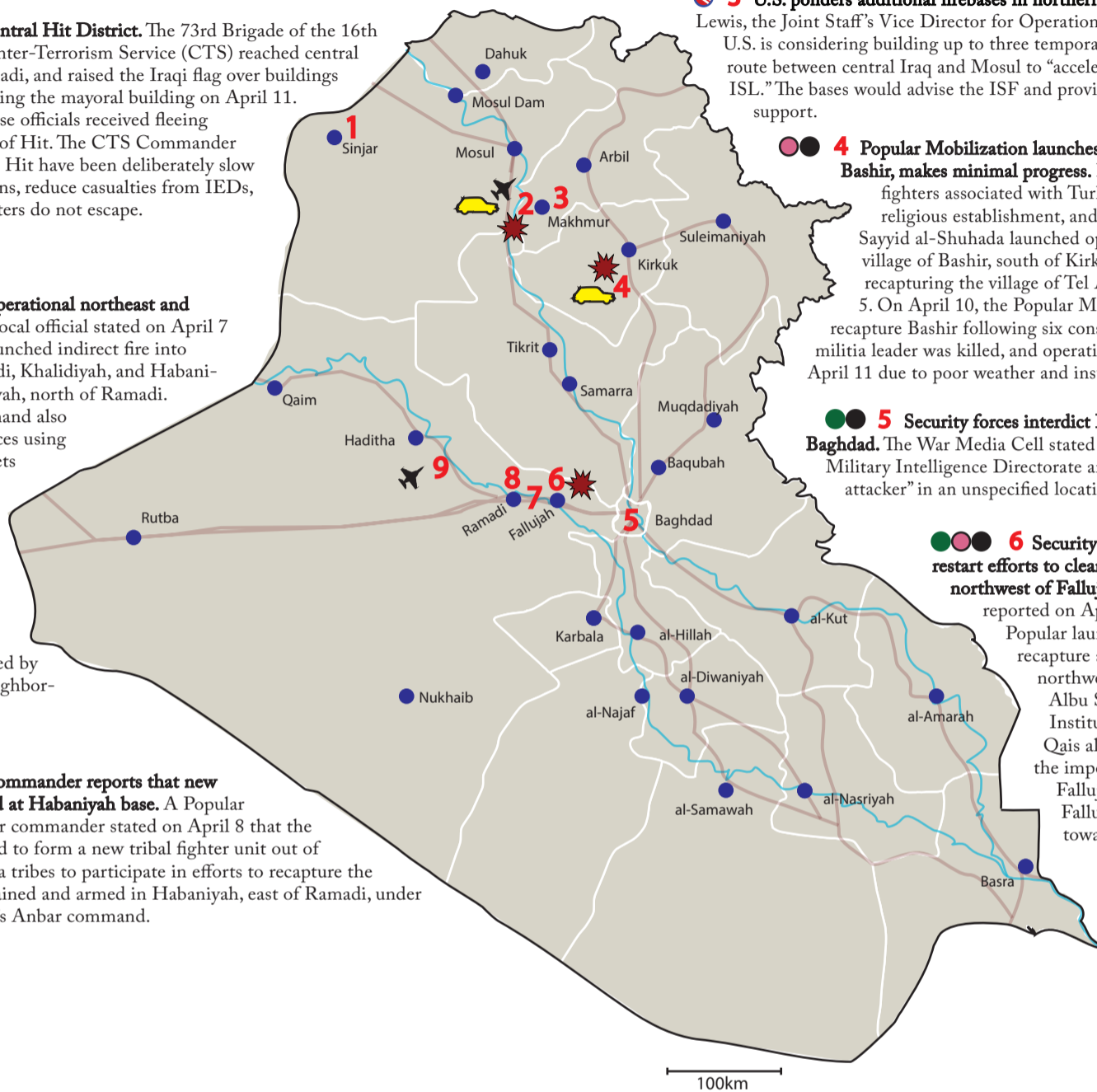
8 **ISIS remains operational northeast and northwest of Ramadi.** A local official stated on April 7 that ISIS attacked and launched indirect fire into residential areas in Ramadi, Khalidiyah, and Habaniyah from Jazeera Khalidiyah, north of Ramadi. Anbar Operations Command also reported that security forces using artillery and Kornet rockets killed 11 ISIS militants in Albu Thiab, northwest of Ramadi on April 7. A security source stated that four neighborhoods in central Ramadi have yet to be cleared of IEDs, and that three people were wounded by an IED in al-Andalus neighborhood on April 8.

4 **Popular Mobilization launches operations to recapture Bashir, makes minimal progress.** Popular Mobilization fighters associated with Turkmen militias, the Shi’a religious establishment, and Iranian proxy militia Kata’ib Sayyid al-Shuhada launched operations to recapture the village of Bashir, south of Kirkuk, on April 5, reportedly recapturing the village of Tel Ahmed near Bashir on April 5. On April 10, the Popular Mobilization failed to recapture Bashir following six consecutive attacks; one senior militia leader was killed, and operations were put on hold on April 11 due to poor weather and insufficient air support.

5 **Security forces interdict ISIS suicide attacker in Baghdad.** The War Media Cell stated on April 11 that the Military Intelligence Directorate arrested an ISIS “suicide attacker” in an unspecified location in eastern Baghdad.

7 **Tribal fighter commander reports that new formations will be formed at Habaniyah base.** A Popular Mobilization tribal fighter commander stated on April 8 that the central government agreed to form a new tribal fighter unit out of fighters from Fallujah area tribes to participate in efforts to recapture the city. Volunteers will be trained and armed in Habaniyah, east of Ramadi, under the Popular Mobilization’s Anbar command.

6 **Security forces, Iraqi Shi’a militias restart efforts to clear key ISIS-held town northwest of Fallujah.** A security source reported on April 6 that IA forces and the Popular launched operations to recapture areas north of Saqlawiah, northwest of Fallujah, including Albu Shajal and the Technical Institute. Asa’ib Ahl al-Haq leader Qais al-Khazali stressed on April 7 the importance of recapturing Fallujah and Garma, northeast of Fallujah, before turning efforts towards Ninewa.



- Major Cities
- ✈ Airstrikes
- Coalition
- ISF
- Peshmerga
- Anti-ISIS Iraqi Sunni Tribes
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Political blocs continue to jockey for influence over the final composition of the Council of Ministers (CoM) amid increased threats to Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi’s position. Reuters reported on April 6 that U.S. and Iranian officials intervened to “stave off” an initiative by Vice President Nouri al-Maliki to oust PM Abadi, with the commander of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) – Quds Force, Qassim Suleimani, reportedly intervening in order to prevent any change in the Iraqi government. Meanwhile, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, speaking in Baghdad on April 8, reiterated that the U.S. administration had unequivocal support for PM Abadi. U.S., and notably Iranian, support for the notion of keeping PM Abadi in his position indicate that PM Abadi will likely remain Prime Minister, as political blocs will be hesitant to oppose U.S. and Iranian directives. However, it also looks increasingly likely that political blocs will determine the final composition of the cabinet and will not select technocrats for the ministerial positions or other senior government posts, as PM Abadi originally intended. The Council of Representatives (CoR) is slated to discuss the new cabinet on April 12, but the date could be further delayed or the session blocked by a lack of quorum if no agreement can be reached before the CoR session. It remains to be seen how the Kurdistan Alliance, the most vocal opponents of the cabinet reshuffle, and Muqtada al-Sadr, who has positioned himself as a leader of the reform process and the strongest supporter of the cabinet reshuffle, will react to the new cabinet changes. However, both have previously stated they will pursue a no-confidence vote or withdraw from government if their vision of the cabinet reshuffle are not met, courses of action that have the potential to seriously undermine the stability of the government. It thus looks increasingly likely that any substantial changes in government will be delayed, if they occur at all. Meanwhile, the U.S. is considering building additional firebases in northern Iraq to support operations to recapture Ninewa that have stalled due to stiff resistance from ISIS and manpower issues. The proposal would provide necessary assistance for the ground offensive while demonstrating U.S. support for the Iraqi Security Forces and the Iraqi government, though these additions may not be significant enough factors to make up for the limited number of ISF members currently engaged in operations.