

1 ISF recapture Qayyarah city. The Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) with units from the Counter Terrorism Service (CTS) and 9th Iraqi Army (IA) Armored Division with Coalition air support recaptured the city of Qayyarah on August 25, after launching operations on August 23. The forces also secured the oil refinery.

10 Joint forces clear Khalidiyah desert, north of Ramadi. Joint Operations Command (JOC) announced on August 27 that security forces from the Iraqi Army, Anbar local police, Federal Police, and Popular Mobilization with Iraqi air support cleared the entire Khalidiyah desert between Fallujah and Ramadi. The operation to clear the area began in early July following the recapture of Fallujah.

9 ISIS launches SVEST attack against wedding west of Karbala. Five ISIS attackers wearing Suicide Vests (SVEST) attacked a wedding party in Ain al-Tamur, in western Karbala Province, on August 28. One SVEST attacker detonated, while security forces killed the other four in a shootout. The attack killed at least 15 people and injured 16 others. ISIS claimed the attack, but stated only four attackers participated.

8 Council of Representatives dismisses Defense Minister. The Council of Representatives (CoR) dismissed Sunni Defense Minister Khalid al-Obeidi on August 25 in a vote of no-confidence. The vote was rendered by a simple majority, despite the Constitutional stipulation that any ministerial change be approved by an absolute majority. Obeidi acknowledged his dismissal, while Mutahidun, Obeidi's political party, stated on August 28 that it will appeal the dismissal as unconstitutional. PM Abadi stated on August 30 that he would present a nominee for the vacancy after Eid al-Ahda, a holiday on September 12.

7 CoR passes General Amnesty Law.

The CoR passed the General Amnesty Law on August 25, which would release anti-government protesters from prison, many of them accused on terrorism charges. The bulk of those released would be Sunni protesters who never received fair trial. Sunni political parties have applauded the law, while several Shi'a parties as well as former PM Nouri al-Maliki denounced the law, stating it allowed "impunity for thousands of terrorists and criminals." The law passed in the CoR prior to the vote of no-confidence of Defense Minister Obeidi.

6 CoR begins questioning of Kurdish Finance Minister. The CoR began to question Kurdish Finance Minister Hoshyar Zebari on August 25, following the dismissal of Defense Minister Obeidi. The CoR reported on August 27 that they were "unsatisfied" with Zebari's responses. The Reform Front announced on August 30 that they had requested a vote of no-confidence, though no date has yet been set for the vote.

2 ISIS targets IDP camp in Makhmur with SVESTs. ISIS detonated a Suicide Vest (SVEST) at an Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camp in Makhmur, killing two people and wounding two others when security forces tried to stop the attacker. Security forces killed a second SVEST attacker before he detonated. Officials stated that the attackers were suspected ISIS members. ISIS has not yet claimed the attack.

3 KRG delegation meets with PM Abadi regarding oil exports. A Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) delegation led by KRG Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani arrived in Baghdad on August 29 to meet with PM Abadi. The delegation discussed the upcoming operation in Mosul and the questioning of Finance Minister Zebari. The meeting also discussed oil production, particularly from the Kirkuk Oil Fields, which resumed exports through a Kurdish pipeline on August 22. PM Abadi confirmed his commitment to upholding the agreement between the KRG and Iraq, which exchanges Kurdish oil exports for an allocation of the Iraqi federal budget. Upholding this agreement will be especially relevant as legislation for the 2017 federal budget approaches.

4 Suleimaniyah-Halabja governor swap reveals fissures within PUK. The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and Gorran agreed to swap the governorships of the PUK-held Suleimaniyah Province and the Gorran-held Halabja Province as part of the new PUK-Gorran political alliance. However, several PUK members resisted the switch in Suleimaniyah Province. The PUK and Gorran met on August 25 and voted in Gorran member Hafal Abu Bakr as the new governor of Suleimaniyah, when five PUK members left the session in protest of the replacement.

5 Tribal clashes northeast of Baquba lead to joint force intervention. Tribal clashes broke out on the evening of August 26 in Abu Saida, northeast of Baquba, and lasted through August 28. The clashes resulted in the death of one person and injury of seven others, as well as the burning of several residential buildings. A Council of Representatives (CoR) member from Diyala Province stated that an emergency meeting was held on August 27 with Diyala Governor Muthanna al-Tamimi and security officials. The meeting called for PM Haidar al-Abadi to send in reinforcements to the area, which he approved. In response to the clashes, the Director of Abu Saida Sub-District offered his resignation, reportedly at the urging of Badr Organization leader Hadi al-Amiri, in order to restore stability. The deployed forces withdrew from Abu Saida on August 29.



- Major Cities
- Coalition
- ISIS
- ★ Major Clash
- ISF
- ☐ SVEST
- ✈ Airstrikes
- Iraqi Shi'a Militias
- ☐ Demonstration

100km

By Emily Anagnostos and the ISW Iraq Team
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The Council of Representatives (CoR) dismissed Sunni Defense Minister Khalid al-Obeidi on August 25, complicating the success of anti-ISIS operations and Sunni reconciliation efforts. The removal of Defense Minister Obeidi on the eve of strategic Mosul operations could limit the U.S.'s ability to effectively coordinate with the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). The ISF now lacks both a Defense and Interior Minister, who share responsibility of the security forces. Efforts to fill the defense ministry will likely further political instability within the Sunni parties, which fractured over Obeidi's dismissal between parties supportive of Obeidi and those supportive of Sunni CoR Speaker Salim al-Juburi, an Obeidi rival. The fracture has already setback government efforts of Sunni reconciliation, a requirement for anti-ISIS operations in Iraq, and could preclude Sunni ability to present and support a nominee. This paralysis could lead to the defense ministry transferring to a candidate more aligned with Iran, which may restrict U.S. involvement in Iraq as the Mosul operation approaches.

The method by which the CoR dismissed Obeidi sets a dangerous precedence of lowering the threshold of support needed to dismiss a minister. The CoR dismissed Obeidi by a simple majority vote, despite the constitutional requirement for an absolute majority. The ruling was based on a Federal Court statement in December 2015 that qualified absolute majority as the "majority of those attending," which is the definition of a simple majority. Under an absolute majority, the CoR needs at least 165 people to dismiss a minister, while a simple majority could require as little as 83 votes. The Reform Front, former PM Nouri al-Maliki's support base, is consistently within reach of that minimum.

The Reform Front may attempt to similarly oust other ministers who are allies of Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi in order to undermine his premiership, including Kurdish Finance Minister Hoshyar Zebari. The CoR questioned Zebari on August 25, after which the Reform Front announced on August 30 that they had requested a no-confidence vote. No date has yet been set for the vote. Zebari's dismissal could collapse ongoing negotiations regarding Kurdish oil exports and have a similar effect on the International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan, which was primarily obtained due to Zebari's efforts. Removing Zebari, who is well-liked across the Kurdish parties, could prompt a Kurdish walk out from the Iraqi Government if they see their participation in Baghdad as futile. The political fallout between Arbil and Baghdad, two of the U.S.'s key allies, could complicate operations in Mosul and may accelerate momentum towards a Kurdish independence referendum.