

1 Peshmerga Ministry announces that Popular Mobilization will participate in Mosul. Secretary General of the Ministry of Peshmerga Jabbar Yawar announced on September 29 that there is a general agreement that the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), Peshmerga, and Coalition as well as the Popular Mobilization, tribal fighters, and National Mobilization, a Turkish-backed Sunni militia, will participate in the campaign in Mosul. Yawar stated that Kurdistan Regional President Masoud Barzani will discuss the issue of Mosul and Baghdad-Arbil relations during his visit to Baghdad.

9 U.S. to deploy additional 615 advisors to Iraq at PM Abadi's request. The U.S. Department of Defense announced on September 28 that it would send an additional 615 advisors to several bases in Iraq in the coming weeks at the request of Minister Haidar al-Abadi for upcoming operations in Mosul. U.S. Secretary of Defense Ash Carter stated that the troops would continue to train and advise both ISF and Peshmerga units, primarily for Mosul, but also to "protect and expand" ISF gains elsewhere in Iraq. Carter stated that some forces would be based at Qayyarah Airbase, south of Mosul, and Ain al-Asad Airbase, in western Anbar, but declined to name additional basing locations. PM Abadi stated that the U.S. forces would not take an active role in fighting and that their number would decrease immediately after the battle.

8 ISF recapture Shirqat, last ISIS-held district in Salah al-Din Province. The ISF, including units from the 9th, 15th, and 16th Iraqi Army Divisions and local tribal fighters under the Popular Mobilization, with Coalition and Iraqi air support, launched an operation to retake Shirqat on September 20. The units recaptured the city on September 22, clearing the last ISIS-held city in Salah al-Din Province and finalizing conditions to move towards Mosul. Iranian-backed Shi'a militias moved into the city and its environs following its recapture.

7 President Barzani meets with PM Abadi in Baghdad to discuss Arbil-Baghdad relations and financial challenges. President Barzani met in Baghdad on September 29 and 30 with senior Iraqi officials and party leaders. This was Barzani's first visit to Baghdad since 2013. In a press conference with PM Abadi, Barzani affirmed support for the Iraqi Government and stressed his desire to solve "all outstanding issues" between Baghdad and Arbil. The two also discussed impending operations in Mosul, during which PM Abadi stressed that the Kurds should not exploit operations to expand their territory. Barzani also announced an agreement with PM Abadi to resolve economic issues, especially regarding gas, oil, and salaries for KRG employees and Peshmerga. The visit was largely seen as "optimistic," though some Kurdish officials doubted if Baghdad could pay for even half of the salaries of the KRG's "1,400,000 employees."

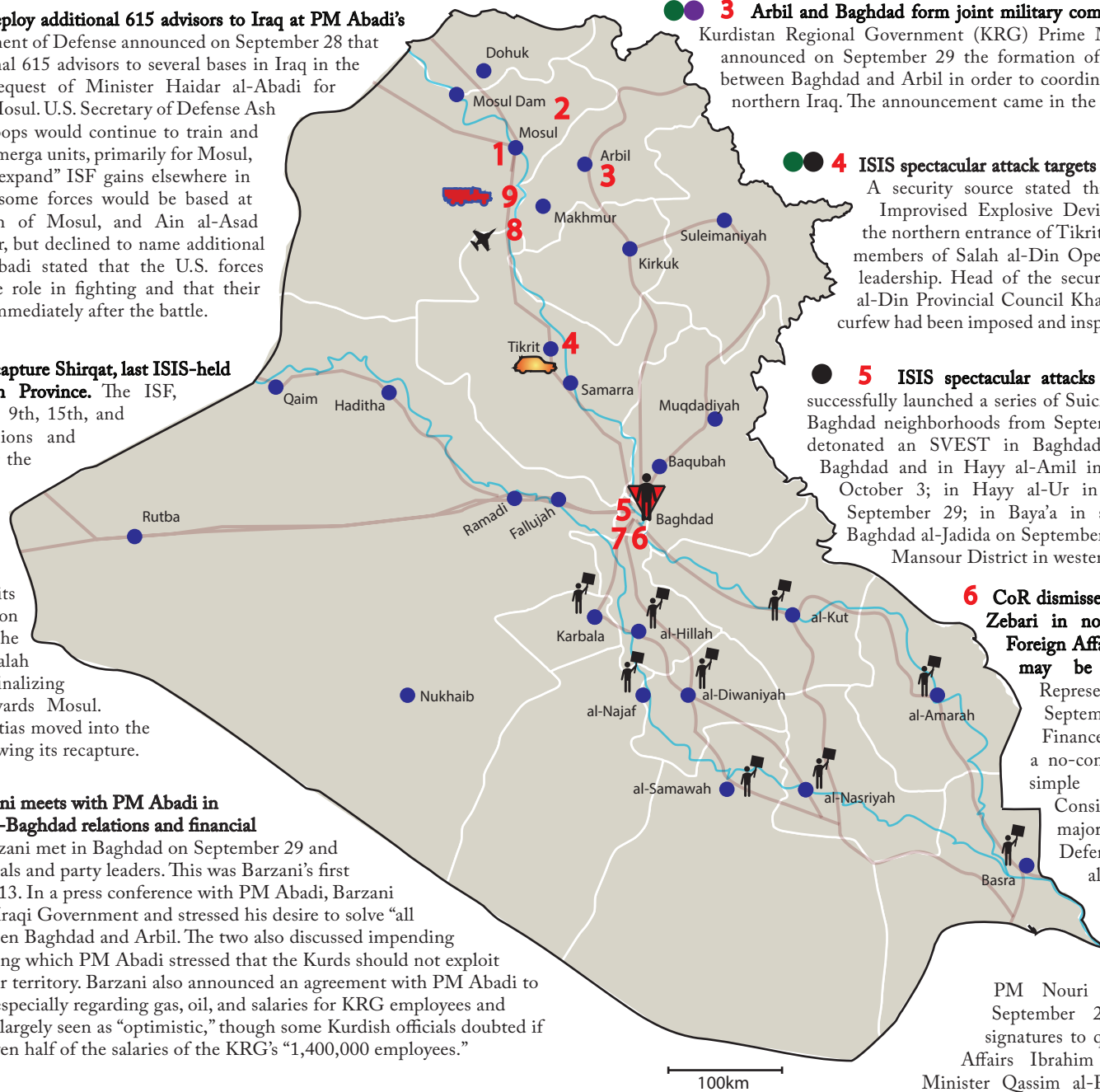
2 Turkey extends mandate for forces in Iraq and Syria. The Turkish parliament announced on October 1 that it has extended the mandate for Turkish forces to operate abroad, including in Iraq and Syria. Turkish President Recep Erdogan stated that Turkey "will play a role in the Mosul liberation operation," adding that Turkey will work to both fight the PKK in Iraq and protect minority Turkmen populations in Ninewa Province. The Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned the mandate and called for Turkish forces to withdraw from their current base in Bashiqa, northeast of Mosul.

3 Arbil and Baghdad form joint military committee for Mosul operation. Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani announced on September 29 the formation of a joint military committee between Baghdad and Arbil in order to coordinate operations in Mosul and northern Iraq. The announcement came in the midst of President Barzani's visit to Baghdad.

4 ISIS spectacular attack targets security leadership in Tikrit. A security source stated that a Suicide Vehicle-borne Improvised Explosive Device (SVBIED) detonated at the northern entrance of Tikrit on September 24, killing six members of Salah al-Din Operations Command (SDOC) leadership. Head of the security committee of the Salah al-Din Provincial Council Khalid al-Khazraji stated that a curfew had been imposed and inspections carried out following the attack.

5 ISIS spectacular attacks increase in Baghdad. ISIS successfully launched a series of Suicide Vest (SVEST) attacks in Baghdad neighborhoods from September 25 to October 3. ISIS detonated an SVEST in Baghdad al-Jadida in southeastern Baghdad and in Hayy al-Amil in southwestern Baghdad on October 3; in Hayy al-Ur in northeastern Baghdad on September 29; in Baya'a in southwestern Baghdad and Baghdad al-Jadida on September 27; and in Hayy al-Iskan in Mansour District in western Baghdad on September 25.

6 CoR dismisses Finance Minister Hoshyar Zebari in no-confidence vote, indicates Foreign Affairs and Electricity ministers may be next. The Council of Representatives (CoR) voted on September 21 to dismiss Kurdish Finance Minister Hoshyar Zebari in a no-confidence vote rendered by a simple majority of 158-77. The Constitution requires an absolute majority, but the dismissal of Defense Minister Khalid al-Obeidi on August 25 set the precedent of only needing a simple majority. The Reform Front, the shadow party of former PM Nouri al-Maliki, announced on September 26 that it had collected signatures to question Minister of Foreign Affairs Ibrahim al-Jaafari and Electricity Minister Qassim al-Fahdawi, a member of the Sunni Loyalty for Anbar Movement.



- Major Cities
- Iraqi Security Forces (ISF)
- Peshmerga
- ▲ SVEST
- ▲ Demonstration
- ✈ Airstrikes
- Iraqi Shi'a Militias
- ISIS
- 🚗 SVBIED
- 🚚 Coalition Deployment
- 🚩 Coalition
- Anti-ISIS Iraqi Sunni Tribes
- Turkey

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The Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) have finalized conditions to begin the push north towards Mosul and its environs. The ISF recaptured Shirqat on September 22, the last ISIS-held city in Salah al-Din Province. Shirqat's recapture extends the ISF's control up the Tigris River from Baghdad to Qayyarah, placing the ISF on the doorstep of Mosul's environs. The U.S. announced on September 28 that it would deploy an additional 615 advisors to several bases, including Qayyarah, to train Iraqi and Kurdish forces in preparation for the Mosul operation. The deployment represents the third "boost" to U.S. forces in Iraq since April. The deployment could help generate additional ISF forces, which are still needed to retake and hold Mosul. Meanwhile, Arbil and Baghdad announced the formation of a joint military committee on September 29 to coordinate in Mosul while the Ministry of Peshmerga announced Popular Mobilization, tribal fighters, and National Mobilization, a Turkish-backed Sunni militia, will participate in the operation. The statements give a possible distinction between Sunni tribal fighters under the Popular Mobilization umbrella, which are acceptable to the Coalition, and Iranian-backed Shi'a militias in the Popular Mobilization, which are unacceptable. Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi warned the Peshmerga, however, that they should not exploit the operation to expand the boundaries of Iraqi Kurdistan.

Iraqi officials have rejected Turkish presence in the operation. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs renewed calls for Turkey to leave its base near Mosul after the Turkish parliament voted to extend the mandate for Turkish troops in Syria and Iraq on October 1. Turkish President Recep Erdogan stated on October 1 that Turkey will have a role in Mosul operations, likely in order to ensure the post-ISIS administration of Mosul is receptive to Turkish interests and to retain oversight of Kurdish ambitions in the region. Turkish presence could complicate the Iraqi Government's ability to resolve Mosul's post-ISIS governance if Turkey tries to influence the outcome in its favor.

ISIS has increased its attacks in Baghdad and renewed attacks around Tikrit likely in order to detract from the ISF's ability to deploy north to Mosul. The Coalition assessed on September 29 that eight to twelve Iraq Army brigades would be needed to retake the city, however an estimated half of the ISF remain in and around Baghdad in order to secure the capital. ISIS will play on the ISF's manpower shortage in order to delay or weaken the ISF's operation into Mosul. The Coalition can reduce this vulnerability by generating and training additional security forces.

Former PM Nouri al-Maliki continues to unravel PM Abadi's support base. The Council of Representatives (CoR) voted to dismiss Kurdish Finance Minister Hoshyar Zebari on September 21 in the same method in which it dismissed Defense Minister Khalid al-Obeidi on August 25. The Reform Front, Maliki's shadow party, spearheaded the effort, which succeeded largely due to a fallout between the Kurdish parties over Zebari's survival. The Reform Front is now pushing for the dismissal of Minister of Foreign Affairs and former National Alliance chairman Ibrahim al-Jaafari and Sunni Minister of Electricity, Qassim al-Fahdawi. Maliki will continue his efforts to unseat PM Abadi's administration in order to set conditions for the ultimate dismissal of PM Abadi himself. PM Abadi will face legislative obstacles in October as he needs to present new candidates for five vacant ministries and pass crucial budget legislation, both of which carry the risk of upsetting the status quo. He will need to ensure foremost that the Kurds remain involved in the Iraqi Government, especially on the eve of the Mosul operation. He can do so by providing financial assistance to the Kurdistan Region, which remains in a dire economic crisis. Kurdistan Regional President Masoud Barzani visited Baghdad on September 29 and 30, his first visit in three years, in order to seek significant financial support. Federal assistance to the Kurdistan Region will keep the Kurds in Baghdad's folds despite the strain on Arbil-Baghdad relations over Zebari's dismissal.