

Iraq Situation Report: November 22-23, 2014

1 On November 23, Iraqi Kurdish Peshmerga, Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), and Popular Mobilization Units (PMUs) that include Iraqi Shi'a militias launched reportedly successful operations to clear the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) from the centers of Jalula and Sadia in northeastern Diyala, northeastern Iraq. Peshmerga commanders stated that their forces played the major role in clearing Jalula, while in Sadia ISF, PMUs, and reportedly also Peshmerga combined forces to clear the area. Iraqi Kurdish intelligence sources also stated that ISIS members and their local supporters moved to the areas of "Tabaj and villages in the Udham areas." The attacks were initiated from the three axes of Kbashi, Khanaqin, and Hamrin. Iraqi Kurdistan Vice President Kosrat Rasul stated that there was also coordination with the international coalition during the operations. ISIS has reportedly rigged many areas in Jalula and Sadia with explosives and Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs).

2 On November 22, ISIS launched an attack in the area of Kaharp al-Rut in Dibis district in northwestern Kirkuk. The attack was repelled by the Peshmerga forces in the area.

3 On November 23, coalition airstrikes targeted an ISIS camp in Shura sub-district, which is over 25 km south of Mosul. The airstrikes resulted in the killing of 28 members.

4 On November 22, leader in the Albu Nimr tribe Naim al-Gaoud, stated that tribal forces initiated an operation to clear ISIS from Hit, in western Anbar. According to al-Gaoud, tribal forces and ISF units were 12 km from Hit. On November 23, Anbar Operation Command (AOC) announced that an operation involving the IA, Iraqi Police (IP), and tribes have launched an operation to clear ISIS from Hit. The forces came from the al-Asad airbase and coalition airstrikes were also part of the operation targeting three positions inside Hit that are currently ISIS headquarters. ISF and tribes are now reportedly concentrated northeast of Hit, Hit's northern flank, and between Baghdad and Hit.

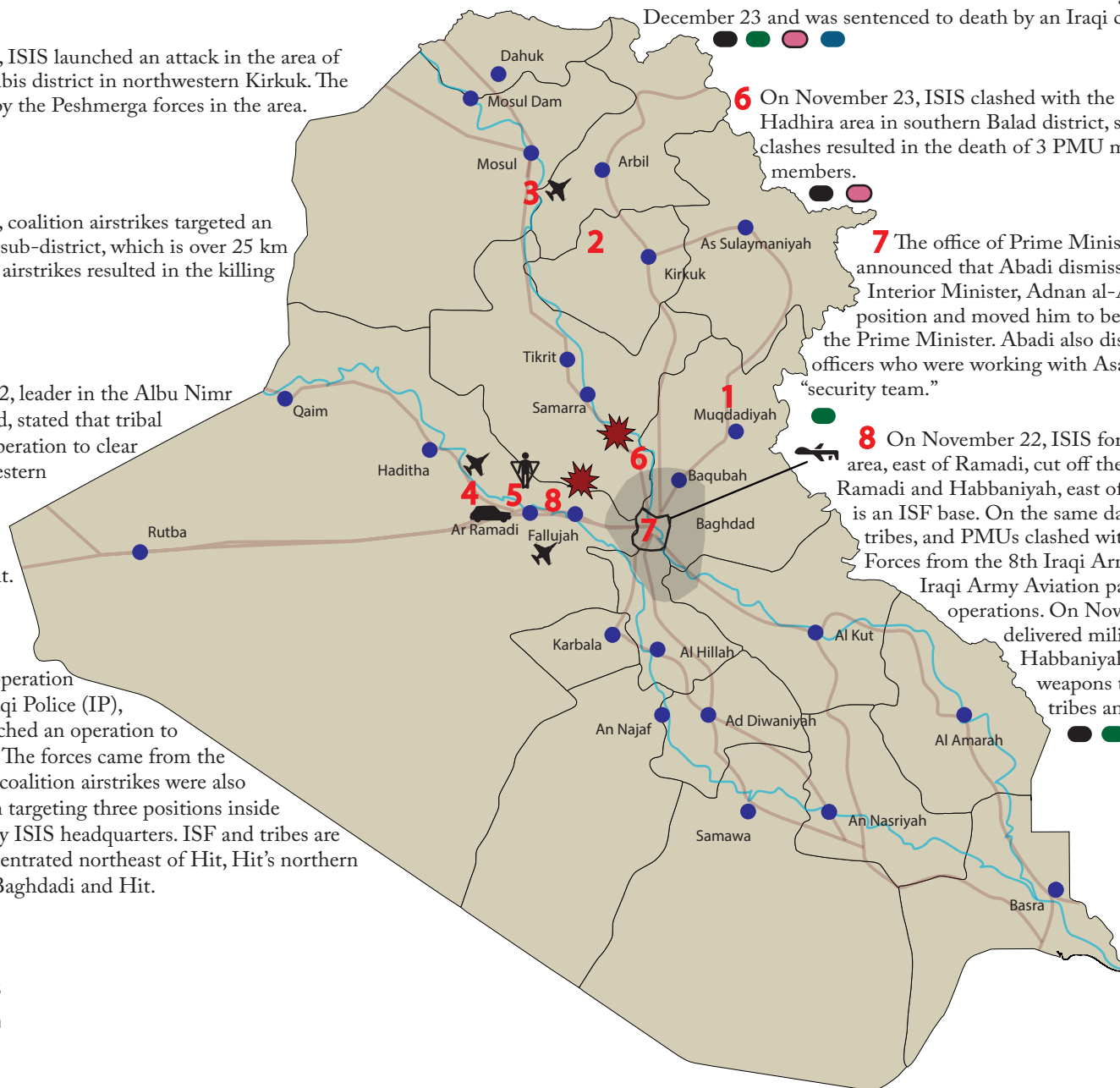
5 On November 23, ISIS launched a major attack on the center of Ramadi in western Iraq's Anbar province. The attack was launched from seven areas including "al-Tamim, Abu Ali al-Jassim, al-Huz, al-Aramel, and 60th street in addition to other areas." ISIS also launched seven mortar rounds targeting the local government compound in central Ramadi. The attack appears to have been repelled and the AOC subsequently announced a curfew in the city. An SVBIED and SVEST attack also targeted the guesthouse of tribal leader Majed al-Suleiman in central Ramadi that resulted in the death or injury of 9 people. PMU and ISF members were reportedly in the house. Also on November 23, senior member of the Albu Alwan tribes Omar al-Alwani stated that "half of the Albu Alwan [tribal members fighting ISIS] will withdraw" if former MP Ahmed al-Alwani, is executed. Ahmed al-Alwani was arrested by the previous Iraqi government under former Premier and current Vice President Nouri al-Maliki's government on December 23 and was sentenced to death by an Iraqi court on November 23.

6 On November 23, ISIS clashed with the PMUs in the Hadhira area in southern Balad district, south of Tikrit. The clashes resulted in the death of 3 PMU members and 3 ISIS members.

7 The office of Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi announced that Abadi dismissed senior Deputy Interior Minister, Adnan al-Asadi, from his position and moved him to be a security advisor for the Prime Minister. Abadi also dismissed a group of officers who were working with Asadi as part of his "security team."

8 On November 22, ISIS forces in the Sajariya area, east of Ramadi, cut off the supply line between Ramadi and Habbaniyah, east of Ramadi, where there is an ISF base. On the same day, ISF, anti-ISIS tribes, and PMUs clashed with ISIS in Sajariya. Forces from the 8th Iraqi Army (IA) Division, and Iraqi Army Aviation participated in the operations. On November 23, three planes delivered military supplies to the Habbaniyah base with the weapons to be distributed to tribes and ISF units.

- Major Cities
- ★ Major Clash
- ✈ SVEST
- ☒ SVBIED
- ✈ Airstrikes
- ✈ Armed Drones
- Peshmerga
- ISF
- ISIS
- Anti-ISIS Tribes
- Coalition
- Iraqi Shi'a militias



Content: Ahmed Ali
Graphics: Brian Fisher

The fight against the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) continues to yield mixed results. In Diyala province, Iraqi Kurdish Peshmerga, Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), and Popular Mobilization Units (PMUs) that include Iraqi Shi'a militias, achieved significant territorial gains against ISIS. The combined forces were able to regain control of the majority of areas in the districts of Jalula and Sadia in northeastern Diyala. These gains are significant and also represent a continuation of a trend in Diyala where anti-ISIS forces have been able to target the group and limit its successes. Typically, full regaining of ISIS-held areas does not materialize immediately given ISIS entrenchment, pockets of resistance, and its deployment of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) to impede the progress of forces. Nonetheless, ISIS does not have freedom of movement and complete control of Jalula and Sadia will likely take place in the upcoming days as ISIS appears to have been forced to move to its stronghold areas adjacent to Jalula and Sadia. These areas will be challenges given their difficult terrain. In Anbar, ISIS persists to be a major threat to the capital city of Ramadi and to the ISF and anti-ISIS Iraqi Sunni tribes. ISIS continues to seek control of Ramadi and it is racing the ISF and likely international coalition efforts to reinforce and consolidate in the province. In Baghdad, Prime Minister, Haidar al-Abadi, removed senior Deputy Interior Minister and ally of former Prime Minister and current Vice President Nouri al-Maliki, Adnan al-Asadi, from his position. Asadi had operated as de-facto Minister of Interior in the last four years. His dismissal follows Abadi's November 12 decision to reshuffle senior security commanders. It represents Abadi's strategy to purge the security structure from "Maliki's men." Consequently, this is not a direct challenge to the Minister of Interior, Mohammed al-Ghaban, and his Iranian-backed political group, the Badr organization. Therefore, it will be important to watch if Abadi will seek to further reform the Ministry of Interior at the expense of Badr. The death sentence of the Anbari Former Iraqi Sunni MP, Ahmed al-Alwani, is ill-timed. Alwani was arrested in December of 2013. He was known for being inflammatory due to his sectarian rhetoric but his arrest triggered the events that led to ISIS controlling Fallujah. The Albu Alwan tribe is now fighting ISIS in Ramadi and this decision could weaken the crucial anti-ISIS tribal coalition.