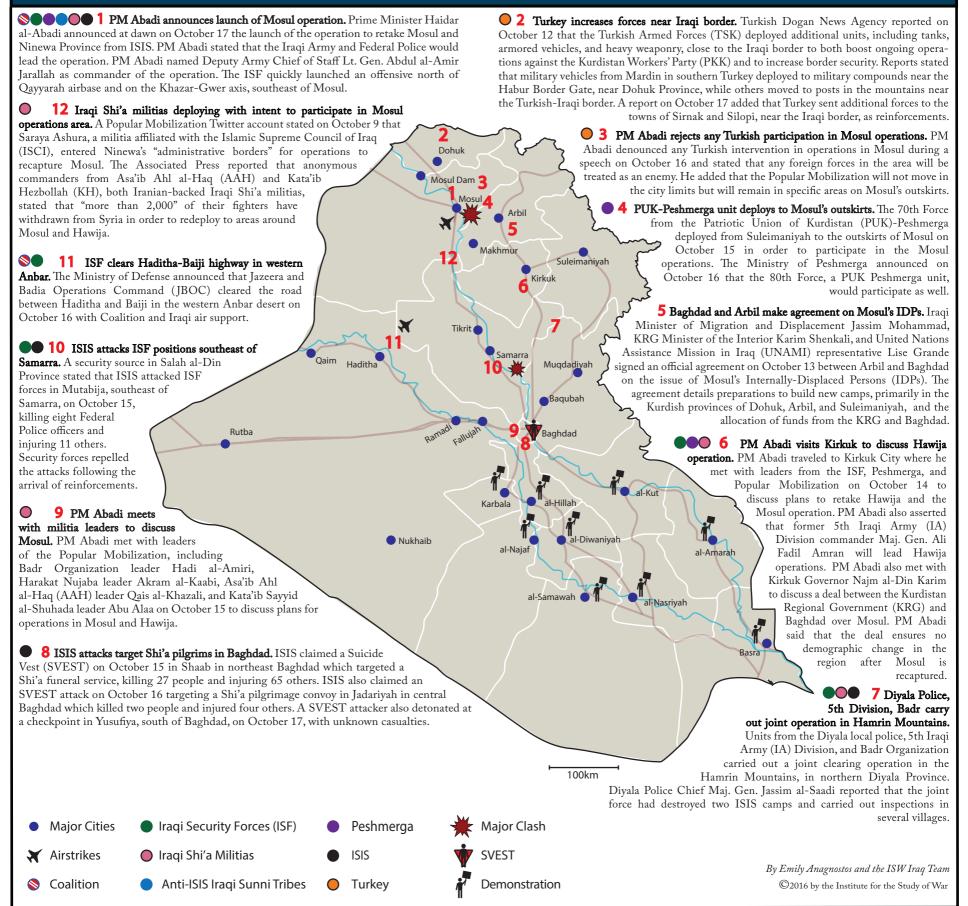


Iraq Situation Report: October 12-17 2016



Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi announced the launch of operations to retake Ninewa Province and Mosul from ISIS at dawn on October 17. PM Abadi named Deputy Army Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Abdul al-Amir Jarallah as commander of the operation. The Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and Peshmerga began offensives on the Khazar-Gwer axis, southeast of Mosul, and moved north from the Qayyarah airbase, retaking several villages. ISIS offered minimal resistance to the joint forces' advance and may elect to withdraw the bulk of its forces to Mosul to await the city offensive.

Security forces over the past several weeks have moved into position to begin a multi-axis offensive to encircle the city. Units from Counter Terrorism Service (CTS) and Iraqi Army moved to locations in Kurdish-held territory north and northeast of the city, where they have begun to work in parallel with Peshmerga forces around Khazar and Gwer. Units from the Peshmerga affiliated with the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) also moved into primarily Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) terrain around Khazar. Coordination between the KDP and PUK Peshmerga is rare and was likely the result of a still undisclosed agreement. Shi'a militias, including Iranian-backed groups, have deployed into the vicinity, primarily around Qayyarah and Shirqat, where they will likely shadow militia-friendly ISF units northwards. Turkey also responded to the launch of the Mosul operation, moving military forces along the Iraqi border as Turkish President Recep Erdogan maintained Turkey's right to intervene in Iraq. Coordination between forces in Iraq remains high, although complications may ensue as these forces near the city itself and prospects for Mosul's post-ISIS administration become more immediate.