

Iraq Situation Report: July 3, 2014

1 According to an unnamed activist in Mosul, criminal activity, including kidnapping for ransom, is on the rise primarily in western Mosul. The perception is that ISIS is not tackling this issue because it is prioritizing other missions. In general, reports indicate difficult living conditions in the city due to lack of payment for government officials since the fall of Mosul on June 10.

2 ISF ordnance teams are reportedly dismantling large numbers of IEDs emplaced by ISIS in the Salah ad-Din provincial government building in the southern outskirts of Tikrit.

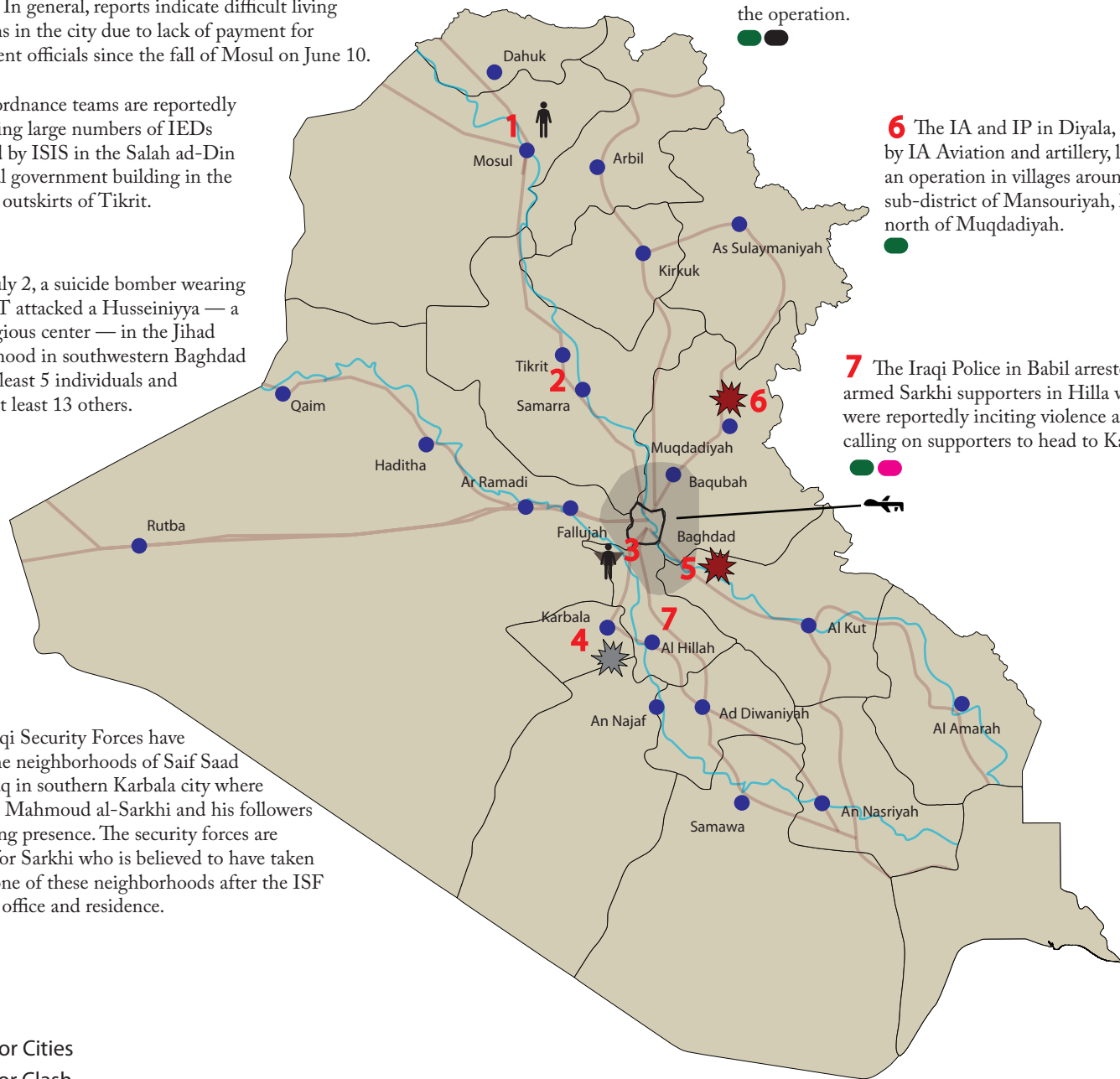
3 On July 2, a suicide bomber wearing an SVEST attacked a Husseiniyya — a Shi'a religious center — in the Jihad neighborhood in southwestern Baghdad killing at least 5 individuals and injuring at least 13 others.

4 The Iraqi Security Forces have besieged the neighborhoods of Saif Saad and Molhaq in southern Karbala city where Shi'a cleric Mahmoud al-Sarkhi and his followers have a strong presence. The security forces are searching for Sarkhi who is believed to have taken shelter in one of these neighborhoods after the ISF burned his office and residence.

5 Forces from the 31st Brigade, 8th IA Division, FP, and popular committees launched an operation against ISIS in the areas of Buhairat, al-Ruaia, and Fadhiya, northern Babil. The ISF used air assets and artillery in the operation.

6 The IA and IP in Diyala, supported by IA Aviation and artillery, launched an operation in villages around the sub-district of Mansouriyah, located north of Muqdadiah.

7 The Iraqi Police in Babil arrested 28 armed Sarkhi supporters in Hilla who were reportedly inciting violence and calling on supporters to head to Karbala.



- Major Cities
- ★ Major Clash
- ♣ SVEST
- ★ Raid
- ♣ Kidnapping
- ♣ Armed Drones
- ISF
- ISIS
- Followers of al-Sarkhi



by Ahmed Ali, ISW Iraq Team, and Nichole Dicharry

Repercussions from the clashes between the ISF and the followers of Mahmoud al-Sarkhi continue to unfold. Sarkhi is a Shi'a cleric who positions himself as a marja'a, or Shi'a religious authority, of Iraqi and Arab origin. This is seen as a direct challenge to Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani. On June 26, Sarkhi criticized Sistani's June 13 anti-ISIS fatwa. Sarkhi followers have clashed with U.S. forces in the past, in addition to engaging in skirmishes with the Iraqi Security Forces in the spring of 2012. Further clashes in the south are likely to stretch the ISF's already limited resources, creating instability in areas that the ISF need to remain under control as they seek to focus on ISIS.