

Iraq Situation Report: December 23-26, 2014

1 On December 25, an anonymous source stated that SU-25 jets flown by Iraqi pilots started targeting ISIS in Yathrib sub-district, north of Baghdad, for the first time since the fall of Mosul. Meanwhile, four mortar rounds landed in Balad, north of Baghdad injuring four individuals. On December 25, Popular Mobilization Unit (PMU), which include Iraqi Shi'a militias, leaders called for tribal leaders in Yathrib to facilitate the departure of locals from the area in the wake of the December 23 "transport of hundreds" of families by security forces. On December 26, ISF and PMUs led by leader of the Badr Organization Hadi al-Ameri; Minister of Interior and a leader in the Badr Organization Mohammed al-Ghabban; and the commander of the Federal Police launched an operation to clear areas around Balad district of ISIS presence. The forces included two infantry battalions and one PMU battalion. The operation reportedly resulted in the clearing of the Albu Tuma area located between Dhuluiya and Mutasim in addition to the Albu Hishma area of Yathrib.

2 On December 25, security forces launched operations against ISIS to clear the neighborhoods of al-Hawz, Mualimin, Andalus, Jumhuri, and 20th Street in central Ramadi in western Iraq. The operations reportedly cleared the neighborhood, although the report is unconfirmed. On December 26, security forces imposed a curfew in Ramadi, and security forces arrested a "sleeper cell" of 14 "terrorists" in Sofiya, east of Ramadi.

3 On December 25, snipers from the Iraqi Special Forces "infiltrated" Albu Jwari village, north of Baiji in Salah ad-Din province and targeted ISIS leadership in the area, killing three ISIS leaders. On December 26, snipers from the Counter Terrorism Services' (CTS) Golden Division took positions on top of high buildings in Baiji district to target ISIS while IA Aviation and the air force launched strikes on ISIS in the areas of Albu Jwari and Fatha, north of Baiji.

4 On December 24, an anonymous security source stated that ISIS launched mortar rounds with chlorine on the residential areas of Baghdadi in western Anbar and highlighted the deteriorating humanitarian situation Baghdadi and Joba village due to the presence of ISIS fighters in nearby areas. On December 24, Defense Minister, Khalid al-Obaidi visited al-Asad Airbase in al-Baghdadi. On December 25, Commander of the Emergency Battalion (EB) in al-Baghdadi Barzan al-Obaidi stated that IA and IP supported by EB and the 27th Brigade of the 7th IA Division and tribal fighters from the Obaidi tribes launched operations against ISIS and reportedly cleared 14 villages in Jazirat al-Baghdadi and Joba villages. The operations were supported by coalition airstrikes.

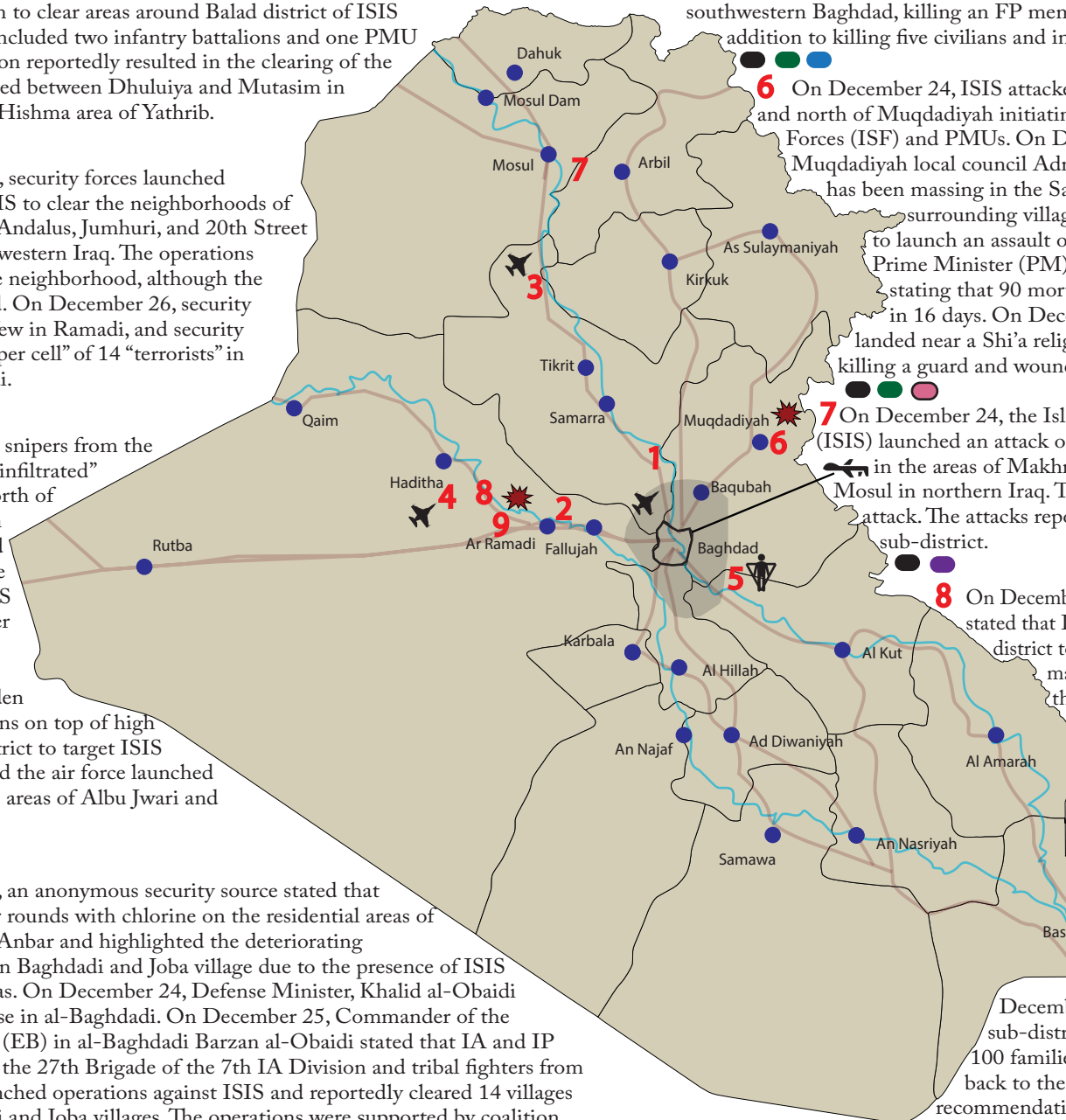
5 On December 24, an attacker with an SVEST targeted a group of anti-ISIS tribal fighters in the Awakening Councils (Sahwa) as they gathered to receive salaries near the headquarters of the 42nd Brigade of the Iraqi Army in Mada'in, southeast of Baghdad. The attack killed 38 individuals and injured 56 others. On December 25, unidentified gunmen stormed a house of Sahwa members in Latifiyah, south of Baghdad. The gunmen killed three members of the Awakening, all relatives, and injured two of their wives. On December 25, three mortar rounds landed on a Federal Police (FP) checkpoint in the Arab Jubur area of Dora, southwestern Baghdad, killing an FP member and injuring four others in addition to killing five civilians and injuring five others.

6 On December 24, ISIS attacked four joint checkpoints east and north of Muqadiyah initiating clashes with Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and PMUs. On December 25, Chairman of Muqadiyah local council Adnan al-Tamimi stated that ISIS has been massing in the Sansal village basin and surrounding villages, 8 km north of Muqadiyah, to launch an assault on the district. He called for Prime Minister (PM) Haidar al-Abadi to intervene, stating that 90 mortar rounds had fallen on the area in 16 days. On December 26, two mortar rounds landed near a Shi'a religious center in Muqadiyah killing a guard and wounding another.

7 On December 24, the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) launched an attack on the Iraqi Kurdish Peshmerga in the areas of Makhmur and Gwer, southeast of Mosul in northern Iraq. The Peshmerga repelled the attack. The attacks reportedly targeted villages in Gwer sub-district.

8 On December 26, a "tribal source" from Hit stated that ISIS is forcing residents of the district to join its ranks due to lack of manpower. The source added that those who reject conscription receive 80 lashes and that many residents "are not allowed to get out."

9 On December 24, forces from Albu Risha Brigade of the FP clashed with ISIS in the "35 km" area, west of Ramadi reportedly killing 12 ISIS members. On December 25, Chairman of Wafa sub-district, west of Ramadi, stated that 100 families that left Wafa will be allowed back to the area after they receive recommendations from the security forces. On December 24, chairman of Anbar Provincial Council, Sabah Karhout stated that clearing Wafa of Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) will take 10 days.



- Major Cities
- Coalition
- SVEST
- Peshmerga
- Major Clash
- Anti-ISIS Iraqi Sunni Tribes
- Airstrikes
- Iraqi Shi'a militias
- Armed Drones
- ISF
- ISIS



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The Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) is intensifying its efforts in Diyala province near the area of Muqadiyah in northeastern Diyala province. This represents an opening for the ISIS effort in Diyala where the organization was cleared from Jalula and Sadia near Muqadiyah in late November by the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), Iraqi Shi'a militias within the Popular Mobilization Units (PMUs), and Iraqi Kurdish Peshmerga. Muqadiyah is historically an area prioritized by the ISF and militias as a line of defense in Diyala; the area was also the sectarian front line during Iraq's 2006-2007 civil war. It will be important to watch if ISIS decides to activate sleeper cells and conduct attacks in Diyala's capital, Baqubah, located 26 miles southwest of Muqadiyah. Future ISIS operations in Baqubah will be intended to prevent the PMUs from repositioning to northern Baghdad where ISIS is also engaging in an effort to disrupt PMUs and ISF movements towards Baiji. Baiji is currently contested by ISIS and the ISF. Meanwhile, the ISF is launching preemptive operations against ISIS in western Iraq's Anbar province. This ISF effort is intended to prevent ISIS from weakening the ISF and anti-ISIS tribal strongholds in Anbar's capital, Ramadi, and at Al-Asad airbase in al-Baghdadi, west of Ramadi. The Anbar confrontation will continue to be crucial as ISIS seeks to control the province and expand its terrain while the Iraqi government, anti-ISIS Iraqi Sunni tribes, and coalition forces seek to defend the province in order to secure the momentum and sustain an anti-ISIS tribal movement.