The Rise of the Islamic State and Foreign Volunteers
The report considers documented killings …This report finds that when the fully identified records from four documentation groups plus the Syrian Government were combined and duplicates identified, these five databases identified 191369 unique killings.

- Sex of the Victims: Of the 191369 documented killings in this report, 85.1% are male, 9.3% are female, and 5.6% of records do not indicate the sex of the victim.
- Age of the Victims: Age is unknown for 83.8% of all records…However, the full enumeration does include 2165 records of victims 0-9 years old, and 6638 records of victims 10-18 years old.
- Location of Killing: The three comprehensive non-governmental sources included in this report (the Syrian Center for Statistics and Research, the Syrian Network for Human Rights, and the Violations Documentation Centre) all record more killings in Rural Damascus than in other governorates.
- Combatant and Non-Combatant Status: The status of the victims as combatants or non-combatants is unknown for all but a few records, and consequently, combatant status is not assessed in this report.

Syria: Chemical Attacks in 2013

Alleged chemical attacks in Syria, 2013

- 13 April: Sheikh Maqsoud
- 19 March: Khan al-Assal
- 29 April: Saraqeb
- 24 August: Jobar
- 22nd August: Bahhariya
- 21 August: Ghouta*
- 25th August: Ashrafieh Sahnaya

Source: UN
*The Ghouta attacks took place in Zamalka, Ein Tarma and Muadhamiya

Syria: Civil War Map – Early 2014

Syria Key Rebel Groups Near Aleppo: 9.14

The Islamic State (IS, al-Dowla al-Islamiya) – Jihadi group that emerged in Iraq following 2003 U.S. invasion, currently controls much of western Iraq and eastern Syria and is viewed as extremist and hostile by other rebel groups, including all those below. Its previous names include the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria/the Levant (ISIS/ISIL), the Islamic State of Iraq, and al-Qaeda in Iraq; al-Qaeda cut ties with it in February 2014.

Jabhat al-Nusra (the Support Front): – Jihadi group affiliated with al-Qaeda; its strategic emphasis on partnership (and avoiding confrontation) with non-jihadi rebels distinguishes it from the more extreme IS. Al-Nusra cooperates with mainstream rebel groups against both the Assad regime and IS, though rebel concern with al-Nusra’s territorial and ideological ambitions is rising.

The Islamic Front (al-Jabha al-Islamiya) – A national alliance of Syrian Islamist factions, its components include four of Syria’s most prominent rebel groups: Jaish al-Islam, Saqour al-Sham, Liwa al-Towhid and Ahrar al-Sham. Of those, the latter two play major roles against the regime and IS in greater Aleppo:
1. Liwa al-Towhid (Unity Brigade): A dominant force in Aleppo’s northern countryside and a key player in the city, its political discourse is salafi in name but flexible in implementation.
2. Ahrar al-Sham (Freemen of Syria): Among the strongest groups in the country, it is considered the Islamic Front’s most hardline faction, though it pursues a pragmatic approach in the international and domestic political spheres that distinguishes it sharply from the more extreme al-Nusra.

Jaish al-Mujahidin (Mujahidin Army) – An alliance of factions that joined together to expel IS from Aleppo’s western countryside in January 2014. More pragmatic than ideological, it is a key force on both anti-regime and anti-IS fronts in and around Aleppo.

Harakat Nour al-Din al-Zenki (Nour al-Din al-Zenki Movement) – A founding component of Jaish al-Mujahidin, it left the alliance in May 2014 and has since benefitted from the support of the Military Operations Center (MOC), run by the opposition’s state backers, which has made it one of Aleppo’s most important factions.

Harakat Hazm (Movement of Determination) – A non-ideological alliance formed in January 2014 and based primarily in Idlib province, it is among the MOC’s principal beneficiaries. It expanded its role in Aleppo in mid-2014.

Faylaq al-Sham (Sham Legion) – A pragmatic alliance viewed as moderately Islamist, it has played a supporting role in Aleppo; in August 2014 joined the larger Islamic Front, Jaish al-Mujahidin, Nour al-Din al-Zenki and Hazm in the “Nahrawan al-Sham” operations room coordinating the fight against IS in Aleppo’s northern countryside.

Syrian Revolutionaries Front (SRF, Jabhat Thuwar Souriya) – A non-ideological alliance led by prominent commander Jamal Marouf, it is strong in his base of Idlib province and has affiliate factions elsewhere but does not currently play a major role in Aleppo. It is among the main beneficiaries of MOC.

Source: Crisis Group, Rigged Cars and Barrel Bombs: Aleppo and the State of the Syrian War, Middle East Report N°155 | 9 September 2014
The number of civilians killed in July was 1,186 (including 106 civilian police), while the number of civilians injured was 1,511 (including 177 civilian police). A further 551 members of the Iraqi Security Forces, including Peshmerga and SWAT, were killed and 467 were injured (not including casualties from Anbar operation)...According to information obtained by UNAMI from the Health Directorate in Anbar, the total civilian casualties in Anbar up to 31 July inclusive were 198 killed and 611 injured, with 71 killed and 179 injured in Ramadi and 127 killed and 432 injured in Fallujah.

Protests in Iraq
Week 3: January 5 - January 11, 2013

Overview: As anti-government protests continued in Anbar, Nineawa, and Salah ad-Din, pro-government counter-protests were held in the southern cities of Karbala, Kut, Diwaniyah, Samawa, Najaf, and Basra. Additional military cordons were established in Anbar, Baghdad, Salah ad-Din, and Nineva to contain the anti-government demonstrations.
Baghdad, 1 September 2014 – According to casualty figures released today by UNAMI, a total of at least 1,420 Iraqis were killed and another 1,370 were injured in acts of terrorism and violence in August*.

The number of civilians killed was 1,265 (including 77 civilian police), while the number of civilians injured was 1,198 (including 105 civilian police). A further 155 members of the Iraqi Security Forces were killed, and 172 were injured (not including casualties from Anbar operation).

“In August alone the UN estimates that 600,000 people have been displaced while thousands continue to be targeted and killed by ISIL and associated armed groups simply on account of their ethnic or religious background”, said the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq (SRSG), Mr. Nickolay Mladenov. “The true cost of this human tragedy is staggering”, he added.

“Despite the difficult conditions, urgent measures are being taken by the Government of Iraq, the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and the international community to alleviate the suffering of those fleeing the violence and to secure the return of displaced people to their places of origin in safety and dignity”, Mr. Mladenov added.

CAVEATS: Data do not take into account casualties of the current conflict in Anbar, for which we report separately the figures received from our sources, but which remain unverified by UNAMI. In general, UNAMI has been hindered in effectively verifying casualties from conflict areas and areas under the control of the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL) and associated armed groups. In some cases, UNAMI could only partially verify certain incidents. In addition to the verified figures provided below, UNAMI has also received, without being able to verify, reports of hundreds of casualties along with a large number of reports of civilians who have died from secondary effects of violence, having fled their homes but who perished from lack of access to water, food, medicines and health care in extreme weather conditions. These cases have not been included in the final tally. For these reasons, the figures reported are the absolute minimum number of casualties for the month of August - the actual figures could be significantly higher.

Civilian Casualties (killed and injured) per governorate
Anbar excluded, Baghdad was the worst affected Governorate with 857 civilian casualties (246 killed, 611 injured), followed by Nineveh (625 killed, 70 injured), Kirkuk (95 killed, 248 injured), Diyala (140 killed, 94 injured), Salahadin (105 killed, 103 injured).

Operations in Anbar
According to information obtained by UNAMI from the Health Directorate in Anbar, the total civilian casualties in Anbar up to 31 August, inclusive, were 268 killed and 796 injured, with 53 killed and 360 injured in Ramadi and 215 killed and 436 injured in Fallujah.

Source: UNAMI: https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?pli=1#inbox/148310bf4a3a12f0
Islamic State Map - BBC

Source: Institute for the Study of War, Syria Needs Analysis Project

IS-led Sunni rebel activity
- Occupational presence / support
- August advance
- June advance

Kurdistan Government-controlled
Islamic State Advances: 6.2014

Islamic State Advances: 6.2014

Islamic State Advances: 15.6.2014


Source: Reuters, Staff, 15/06/2014
Islamic State Advances: 17.6.2014
Islamic State Advances: 8.2014

The Rise of the Islamic State

The areas where IS is operating largely match areas where its predecessor, al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), was active during the peak of the sectarian insurgency in 2006.

AQI was eventually suppressed through a combination of a surge in US troop numbers and Sunni tribesmen taking up arms to drive it out.

Structure of the Islamic State

Islamic State (IS) command structure

Strategic leadership
- Sharia (religious) council
- Shura (advisory) council
- Military council
- Security council

IS operates the same structure in nine provinces in Syria and seven in Iraq

Wilayaat (provinces)
- Wali (provincial governors)
- Sharia (religious) council
- Shura (advisory) council
- Military council
- Security council

Qitahaat sectors (local districts)

Same structure repeated at local level

Source: IS investigation team

The state of al-Qaeda affiliates

Last week al-Qaeda severed ties with the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, mostly due to the group’s battles with another al-Qaeda franchise, Jabhat al-Nusra, and its refusal to comply with orders from al-Qaeda leadership. The unofficial U.S. list of al-Qaeda affiliates is down to four, including offshoots in Yemen, North Africa and Somalia.

Al-Qaeda allies

- **Affiliated**
- **Severed ties**

**Diagram:**

- Jabhat al-Nusra
- Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)
- Al-Qaeda core
- Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)
- Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)
- Al-Shabab

After the Air Campaign Begins 8.8.14
Islamic State Massacres: 9.5.14

Reported massacres by the Islamic State


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Iraq Total Armed Drone Sorties</th>
<th>Total Missiles Fired by Drones</th>
<th>Total Drone Strikes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>5,558</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>5,300</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>3,378</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>2,773</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>17,009</strong></td>
<td><strong>65</strong></td>
<td><strong>48</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Year to October 31, 2012

Source: [https://www.google.com/search?q=Air+strikes+Iraq,+graph&client=firefox-a&hs=GE&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&channel=sb&tbm=isch&imgtli=7zDMTX3PNGppum%253A%253BIi1-eBWontHWLM%25253Bhttp%25253A%25252F%25252Fwww.mirror.co.uk%25252Fnews%25252Fworld-news%25252Fsee-warplanes-launch-air-raid-4027719&source=iu&pf=m&fir=7zDMTX3PNGppum%25253A%25252C%25252C_&usg=__F0yKnBXjVdoW5kdqA6sSH3NQxw0%3D&biw=1507&bih=793&ved=0CF4Qyjc&ei=LDAzVNZaB8GqyQSYoYLYDQ#facrc=_&imgdii=_&imgmrc=iZ4OW9sxOKYaM%253A%253BWeXNKuAdhOpw0M%253Bhttp%253A%252F%252Fwww.thebureauinvestigates.com%252Fwp-content%252Fuploads%252F2012%252F2012%252F11%252FIraq-chart1-562x395.jpg%253Bhttp%253A%252F%252Fwww.thebureauinvestigates.com%252F2012%252F12%252F04%252Frevealed-us-and-britain-launched-1200-drone-strikes-in-recent-wars%252F%253B562%252B395](https://www.google.com/search?q=Air+strikes+Iraq,+graph&client=firefox-a&hs=GE&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&channel=sb&tbm=isch&imgtli=7zDMTX3PNGppum%253A%253BIi1-eBWontHWLM%25253Bhttp%25253A%25252F%25252Fwww.mirror.co.uk%25252Fnews%25252Fworld-news%25252Fsee-warplanes-launch-air-raid-4027719&source=iu&pf=m&fir=7zDMTX3PNGppum%25253A%25252C%25252C_&usg=__F0yKnBXjVdoW5kdqA6sSH3NQxw0%3D&biw=1507&bih=793&ved=0CF4Qyjc&ei=LDAzVNZaB8GqyQSYoYLYDQ#facrc=_&imgdii=_&imgmrc=iZ4OW9sxOKYaM%253A%253BWeXNKuAdhOpw0M%253Bhttp%253A%252F%252Fwww.thebureauinvestigates.com%252Fwp-content%252Fuploads%252F2012%252F2012%252F11%252FIraq-chart1-562x395.jpg%253Bhttp%253A%252F%252Fwww.thebureauinvestigates.com%252F2012%252F12%252F04%252Frevealed-us-and-britain-launched-1200-drone-strikes-in-recent-wars%252F%253B562%252B395)
Sinjar Mountain Crisis: 8.8. 14

On Wednesday, IS forces shelled Christian towns north of the Sinjar Mountains, displacing thousands.

Quwasi
Tigris
Mosul
Kurdistan Regional Area
\textit{\textbf{ARMED CLASHES}}

\textit{\textbf{INITIAL ROUTES OF FLEEING CIVILIANS}}

Kuwait
Tigris
Mosul
Kurdistan Regional Area

The bulk of the people of the town of Sinjar fled north and east toward Irbil and other Kurdish-held areas. Those who remained climbed the mountain when armed clashes began. As many as 300 Yazidis are known to have been killed in the town.

\textit{\textbf{U.S. begins airdropping supplies}}

An initial U.S. airdrop that began Thursday included one C-17 (max load 170,900 lbs) and two C-130 aircraft (max load 72,000 lbs each).

\textit{\textbf{Possible airstrikes}}

White House press secretary Josh Earnest said that airstrikes could be carried out near the Sinjar Mountains to “dislodge the forces” that are besieging the Yazidi refugees. The heavily armed militants “are marshalled at the base of the mountain, vowing to kill those who descend.”

Air Strikes in Syria and Iraq: 8.8.14-7.9.14

Source: Timeline of the U.S. Intervention Against the Islamic State (ISIS)
The raids carried out by US, Saudi and UAE aircraft killed 14 of the group's fighters and five civilians in eastern Syria, activists said.

In total the US has carried out more than 200 attacks on IS targets in Iraq since 8 August. French jets joined the Iraq mission on 19 September, launching their first strikes in the north east of the country.


Syria conflict death toll
Documented killings per month

Number of sources for each killing
- 4
- 3
- 2
- 1

UN estimated total (Aug 2014)
191,369

Sources: Violations Documentation Center, Syrian Shuhada, Syrian Network for Human Rights, Syrian Center for Statistics and Research

Latest developments

Aug. 11 4:30 p.m. EDT
U.S. fighter aircraft struck an IS checkpoint east of Sinjar Mountain, destroying it and an adjacent IS truck.

Aug. 12 7:55 a.m. EDT
A U.S. drone destroyed an IS mortar position that was firing on Kurdish forces defending internally displaced Yazidi civilians who were attempting to evacuate.

Aug. 11 3:30 p.m. EDT
U.S. fighter aircraft struck an IS checkpoint southeast of the city of Sinjar and damaged it.

Aug. 11 2:05 p.m. EDT
U.S. fighter aircraft struck an IS checkpoint south of Sinjar city. An armored truck and a Humvee were also destroyed.

Aug. 13 12:20 p.m. EDT
A U.S. drone destroyed an IS armored vehicle west of Sinjar city near an IS checkpoint.

Aug. 13 A team of about 20 Army Green Berets landed on the mountain to assess conditions, but returned to Irbil later in the day.

Aug. 11 1:10 p.m. EDT
U.S. fighter aircraft struck and destroyed an IS checkpoint southwest of Sinjar Mountain. An IS armored personnel carrier and a truck were also destroyed.

Aug. 12 Overnight
Two U.S. C-17 and two C-130 aircraft dropped a total of 108 bundles of supplies on the mountain, containing 7,608 gallons of fresh drinking water and 14,112 meals ready to eat. U.S. fighter aircraft supported the mission.

Don’t Nickel and Dime: Size the US Presence to the Need if the Iraqi Government Reforms

Bases for Strikes in Syria and Iraq

The USS George H.W. Bush Carrier Strike Group has been launching airstrikes in Iraq for weeks.

A combined 47 missiles were launched between two U.S. ships, one in the Persian Gulf and the other in the Red Sea.

Countries supporting or participating in U.S.-led airstrikes

Possible bases used

Sources: Pentagon, CENTCOM, the Institute for the Study of War, the Long War Journal, news reports. The Washington Post. Published on September 23, 2014, 11:54 a.m.

Reported massacres by the Islamic State

Sources: The Institute for the Study of War, the Long War Journal, news reports


Islamic State targets damaged or destroyed

- Vehicles: 162
  Includes armed vehicles and personnel carriers

- Facilities: 29
  Includes antiaircraft artillery and IED locations

- Weapon systems: 21
  Includes fighting positions and checkpoints

Iraq: US Air Strikes by Region to 9.10. 2014

US airstrikes in Iraq by region

NB: some of the releases do not specify how many strikes hit specific regions, which is why some have been placed together (e.g. Irbil and Mosul dam)

Mosul dam: 77
Irbil: 16
Irbil and Mosul Dam: 16
Haditha: 14
Sinjar: 12
Irbil and Haditha: 5
Amirli: 4
Kawju, south of Sinjar: 2

Source: US CENTRAL COMMAND

Area of IS Influence: 9.10. 2014

Control of the urban terrain in Syria is parcelled among a number of armed groups, including the Syrian regime, opposition groups including Jabhat al-Nusra (JN), and the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS). As of September 11, all three formations are on the offensive in various parts of the country. ISIS is currently on the offensive in northern Aleppo province, where it has seized a number of villages from rebels since August 2014. ISW has placed a watch on the Turkish border town of Azaz, a strategic asset for rebels that is threatened by ISIS advances in the area. ISW has also placed a watch on Kuweiris Airbase and the Deir ez-Zour Military Airport, where there are indications of impending ISIS offensives. In central Syria, regime forces have retaken control of villages on their alternate supply route leading northwest out of Hama as part of a counteroffensive against JN and other opposition groups. Opposition groups including JN are currently on the offensive in Quneitra province, where they have seized the border crossing at al-Quneitra as well as other regime installations in the province. Jabhat al-Nusra, the Syrian al-Qaeda affiliate, typically fights alongside other opposition forces throughout the country. Other than a collection of small towns including Salqin and Darkush in Idlib province, JN does not control terrain independently of other opposition groups. ISW assesses that the area of Jizzah in Deraa province represents a JN stronghold and an area where the group might assert control in the future.

Origin of Islamic State Foreign Volunteers 18.9.14

Origin of foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq

KEY
Number of foreign fighters
- 3,000
- 1,500
- 500
- 100
- <50

Sources: Soufan Group, International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence
*Upper estimates used

The US Central Intelligence Agency believes IS may have up to 31,000 fighters in Iraq and Syria - three times as many as previously thought. Among them are foreign recruits - the number of whom has surged since IS declared itself a caliphate in the summer. Figures from the London-based International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ICSR) and the New York-based Soufan Group show an estimated 12,000 fighters from almost 80 countries have travelled to Syria and Iraq to fight with extremist groups.

Strikes in Syria 22-23.9.14

West of Aleppo: Eight strikes targeted al-Qaeda's Khorasan group, a cell that recruits Western jihadists for what intelligence officials say is an “imminent” attack on the United States.

Raqqa: The Islamic State's headquarters in its self-proclaimed capital reportedly sustained heavy damage.

Deir al-Zour, Hasakah, Abu Kamal: GPS-guided missiles fired from F-18s launched from the USS George H.W. Bush bombarded Islamic State training and logistics sites.

Cruise Missile Strikes on Khorasan Terrorist Group in Syria 9.22-23.14

US launched a total of 47 missiles on the Khorasan terrorist group, from two destroyers, the USS Philippine Sea, a guided missile cruiser, and the USS Arleigh Burke, a destroyer.

The first ship was in the Arabian Gulf; the second in the Red Sea.

Part of 14 military strikes on Islamic State targets in Syria

US fighter jets, bombers and drones also dropped ordnance in Syria on militants, their training compounds, headquarters, storage facilities, supply trucks, armed vehicles and a finance center.
The Islamic State is estimated to produce between 25,000 and 40,000 barrels of oil a day, earning as much as $1 million a day, according to industry experts.

The attacks on the refineries came on a day when U.S. military forces reported hitting an Islamic State convoy in Syria near the Iraqi border and Syrian opposition groups reported heavy bombardment in areas near Turkey. American planes also carried out five airstrikes in Iraq, U.S. officials said.

Eight Islamic State vehicles were hit in an airstrike northwest of the border town of al-Qaim, U.S. Central Command said. Syrian opposition activists said the coalition strikes occurred near Boukamal, where the Islamic State drove out other rebels in July after seizing the al-Qaim border crossing. Islamic State bases and checkpoints were also targeted later in the day, the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

The organization also said several aerial attacks were carried out near Kobane, a town on the border with Turkey that has been the site of intense battles in recent weeks between Islamic State fighters and militias from Syria’s Kurdish region.

It was unclear who carried out those reported airstrikes. U.S. military officials did not report launching attacks in the area near the Turkish border.
Islamic State Fighters Drawing on Oil Assets

Poor quality of crude oil in northern Iraqi fields and the steep cost of smuggling probably limited earnings to $1 million a day over the summer.

Recent counteroffensives, international sanctions and crackdowns on smuggling might have reduced that figure to as little as $250,000 a day.

Producing between 25,000 and 40,000 barrels a day from Syria and Iraq, most being smuggled through Islamic State-controlled territory in Syria or through Kurdish territory to Turkey on trucks that carry nearly 2,000 barrels each.

Kurdish oil that is trucked to Turkish ports usually sells for about $50 to $55 a barrel, the Islamic State is probably charging smugglers no more than $40 a barrel.

Refining infrastructure is particularly important because of the poor quality of the crude oil produced in northern Iraq. The Islamic State seized five oil fields in mid-August and two from the Kurdistan Regional Government in late August, according to the International Energy Agency. Altogether they had a production capacity of about 80,000 barrels a day.

Kurdish troops recaptured the Ain Zalah and Butmah fields in northwestern Nineveh province. The Islamic State set fire to oil at Ain Zalah as it retreated from Kurdish peshmerga forces. Two other fields under the control of the Islamic State, Qayyara and Najmah, are so small and the crude of such poor quality that international companies did not bid to...
Syrian Oil Refineries Under Attack as of 24.9.14

The air strikes hit "small-scale" refineries in remote areas in the vicinity of Syrian cities such as Mayadin and Hassakeh, according to a US Central Command statement. These refineries are believed to be producing "between 300-500 barrels of refined petroleum per day", generating as much as $2 million (£1.2m) per day for the militants, a key source of revenue for IS. Source: BBC, "http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-27838034."
The Mosul Dam - a key strategic site seized by IS fighters but subsequently re-taken by Kurdish and Iraqi forces, supported by American air attacks. IS fighters have targeted a number of Iraqi dams during their advance, capturing the facility at Falluja in April. They went on to take Mosul in August, before US air strikes helped force them out later that month.

Air Strikes: 28.9.14

The US with Bahrain, Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates launched 14 strikes against IS in Syria, hitting a number of targets, including Raqqa, a stronghold in eastern Syria captured by the group in 2013.

Separately, US forces also carried out eight strikes against a network of al-Qaeda veterans named Khorasan who had established a safe haven west of Aleppo and were plotting imminent attacks against...
Airstrikes in Iraq and Syria

In addition to 222 known airstrikes launched in Iraq between Aug. 8 and Sept. 29, Syria experienced 51 attacks since Sept. 23. In some cases, one airstrike has hit multiple targets.

Cumulative airstrikes in Iraq and Syria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 18</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 29</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Targets hit by airstrikes

- Armed vehicles: 124
- Armored vehicles: 68
- Fighting positions, posts: 66
- Other vehicles: 59
- Weapons and ammunition: 22
- Fighters, ground units: 15
- Oil refineries: 12
- Tanks: 10
- Artillery: 8

NOTE: The Defense Department began releasing cumulative data about airstrikes on Aug. 18.

Source: Reports from U.S. Central Command, The Washington Post
US and allies attack ISIL in Syria and Iraq
The US and five Arab countries have launched airstrikes against ISIL targets in Syria. The attacks used fighter jets, bombers and Tomahawk missiles. The US had already started airstrikes against ISIL in Iraq in August

More than 150,000 refugees arrived in Turkey since Sep 19

At least 167 ISIL militants were killed

48 airstrikes against ISIL in Syria

219 airstrikes against ISIL in Iraq

Air Strikes in Syria and Iraq 8.8.14 to 1.10.14

* includes strikes against Khorasan
Source: US Central Command

In total the US has carried out more than 200 attacks on IS targets in Iraq since 8 August. French jets joined the Iraq mission on 19 September, launching their first strikes in the north east of the country.

Airstrikes 1-2.10.14

Kobane: Has been under near-constant attack for more than two weeks. Militants appear to be making progress

Hit: Islamic State fighters are reported to have raised their flag over the mayor’s office.

Ramadi: Islamic State forces attacked an army base but were repelled.

SOURCE: CENTCOM, The Institute for the Study of War, news reports.

Air Strikes in Syria and Iraq 8.8.14 to 3.10.14

Air Strikes in Syria and Iraq 8.8.14 to 6.10.14

Confirmed air strikes
Since 8 August 2014

Iraq 258  Syria 90*
* includes strikes against Khorasan

Source: Institute for the Study of War, US Central Command, BBC sources

Air Strikes in Syria and Iraq: 8.10.14

Confirmed air strikes since 8 August 2014

Iraq 270  Syria 104*

* includes strikes against Khorasan

Source: Institute for the Study of War, US Central Command, MoD

Air Strikes in Syria and Iraq: 8.8.14-8.10.14

Air Strikes in Syria and Iraq: 9.10.14

Confirmed air strikes
Since 8 August 2014

**Iraq** 275  **Syria** 113

* includes strikes against Khorasan

- **US warship**
- **IS control**
- **IS support**
- **Kurdistan Government control**

Source: Institute for the Study of War, US Central Command, BBC sources

An estimated 15,000 militants from at least 80 nations are believed to have entered Syria to help overthrow the regime of President Bashar al-Assad according to the CIA and studies by ISCR and The Soufan Group. Many of these fighters are believed to have joined units that are now part of the Islamic State. Western officials are concerned about what these individuals may do upon returning to their native countries.

Water Wars in Iraq: Key Dams


Air strikes in Iraq and Syria

Iraq 284  Syria 147

Mosul Dam recaptured from IS
Start of air strikes in Syria
Strikes focus on Kobane

Source: US Central Command

Air Strikes in Syria and Iraq: 8.10.14

Situation in Iraq
30.9.14-1.10.14

1. On October 3, ISIS reportedly launched an attack on the Basra Oil region, located near the Imam Sadiq Mosque shrine in Basra district, southwest of Dhi Qar. The attack has been ongoing since the morning and ISIS used mortars and rocket-propelled grenades, killing and injuring 16 individuals. The attack on the oil field is a significant blow to Iraq's oil industry, which is crucial for the country's economy. ISIS has been targeting oil infrastructure in recent months, hoping to disrupt the flow of oil and revenue that is essential for the government's stability and security.

2. Leader of the Badr Organization Hadi al-Amiri announced that a joint force from the Iraqi, Pushmergha, and Popular Mobilization, which includes Iraqi Shia militias, launched an operation from Tikrit and Salah ad-Din toward the Zangi bridge that connects Tikrit to Diyala and Salah ad-Din provinces. Amiri added that the force cleared five villages from ISIS on the way to the bridge. Aramco has warned that another attack is launching to clear villages west of Amari.

3. On September 30, a SVBIED detonated at a joint checkpoint at the Salam Bridge east of Karbala, killing and wounding an unknown number of people. Also, a VBIED or a sound bomb detonated in the Bush A-dinar neighborhood of central Karbala, wounding six people.

4. On September 30, two VBIEDs detonated in a park near the Dhi Qar Oil region, one south of Hillah in al-Kadho and the other north of Hillah in Al-Dair. The VBIED in Hillah killed seven people, while the VBIED in Al-Dair wounded eight people.

5. On September 30, ISIS launched a major attack on Dhi Qar, southeast of Samarra from the north and the east axes. The Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) reportedly launched 23 mortars on the area and used one suicide bomber supported by gunmen. On October 1, the Iraqi Army reportedly targeted ISIS near Dhi Qar, killing and injuring 40 ISIS members. On October 1, a source from the ISF in Salah ad-Din reported that "international airstrikes" targeted ISIS near Dhi Qar, killing 40 ISIS members.

6. On October 1, a VBIED detonated in Baghdad's Al-Jadidiah of eastern Baghdad killing at least 13 individuals and injuring 47 others. On September 30, two VBIEDs detonated in the al-Hurriyah area of northern Baghdad. Also, rockets and mortar shells fell on al-Hurriyah, al-Shula, and Sabaa al-Abour in northern Baghdad causing an unknown number of casualties. Reports indicate that nine people died and at least 40 others were wounded. Also, a VBIED detonated near a restaurant in Zaituna, eastern Baghdad, killing five people and wounding 12 others.

7. On September 30, the Pushmergha in Ninewa province launched an operation that reportedly recaptured the town of Kibla from ISIS on the Iraq-Syria border. The Shamar tribe in Kibla supported the Pushmergha in their effort. The Pushmergha also launched an operation against ISIS positions in southern Kirkuk. The Pushmergha ministry denied media reports that indicated the capturing of the PMU and Peshmerga forces in the operation.

8. On September 30, a joint force of Pushmergha fighters, Iraqi Police (IK), and volunteers supported by IA Aviation reportedly recaptured the villages of Saad, Al-Khalid, and Al-Wahda in Dibaji district, south of Kirkuk from ISIS militants after heavy clashes. The director of the Dibaji district police, Chief Jawad Khair, noted the operation killed 15 ISIS militants and resulted in the death of three Iraqi police and two Pushmergha fighters, as well as injuring 18 other Pushmergha fighters.

9. On September 30, the mayor of Kirkuk, Uday Al-Khader, stated that ISIS flooded nine villages in the Shumra area, east of Mosul, by diverting water from nearby rivers to prevent the advance of Iraqi and PMU forces, volunteer fighters, and tribal fighters.

10. On September 30, the Iraqi Army detonated a VBIED in a garage near the al-Dakire Market in central Kirkuk, wounding six people.

Control of Terrain in Iraq 2.10.14

Changes for October 2 update: The Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) launched a complex attack on the city of Hit on the Euphrates River in Anbar province. It is confirmed that ISIS now controls parts of the city while Iraqi Security Forces and members of the Albu Nimr tribe are reportedly preparing an operation to reclaim ISIS-controlled parts.

An assassination campaign against rebel commanders appears to have emerged in western Syria, with at least 12 assassination attempts since the beginning of September 2014. Targeted commanders have ranged from the hardline Salafist Ahrar al-Sham (HASI), to the less extreme Jaysh al-Umma, and finally to U.S.-backed rebels such as Harakat Hazam. While the attacks are unlikely the work of a single actor given the diversity of attack style and targets, the series of assassinations serves to undercut rebel leadership overall. In turn, these assassinations strengthen the influence of Jabhat al-Nusra (JN) over other rebel formations. The trend gives rise to several possibilities: first, JN may have decided to attack rebel commanders more overtly, including through the use of VBIEDs; second, ISIS may be activating multiple sleeper cells throughout Syria. Third, the Syrian regime may be responsible for some or all of these assassination attempts. JN and ISIS may be attacking from positions of strength to exploit recent gains and remove key nodes of Western influence within the Syrian opposition while airstrikes are ongoing. The regime may be attacking from a position of relative vulnerability, using targeted assassinations and chemical weapons to make up for its lack of sufficient ground forces.
Approximate Kurdish population by country

- Turkey: 15 million
- Iran: 8 million
- Iraq: 5 million
- Syria: 1.5 million

Significant numbers of Kurds also inhabit some urban centers outside the highlighted areas (especially in Turkey).

Sources: Map from The Economist at http://www.economist.com (July 5, 2014); population information derived from CIA World Factbook, 2014.

Source: Jim Zanotti, Specialist in Middle Eastern Affairs (jzanotti@crs.loc.gov, 7-1441), Kenneth Katzman, Specialist in Middle Eastern Affairs (kkatzman@crs.loc.gov, 7-7612), “The Kurds and Possible Iraqi Kurdish Independence,” CRS Insights July 15, 2014 (IN10105)
Attack on Syrian Kurds in Kobane

Satellite Image of Kobane 8.10.14

Targets by Category: 8.8.14-8.10.14

Targets hit by US-led air strikes in Iraq and Syria since 8 Aug-8 Oct 2014

- Armed vehicles, inc tanks
- Refineries
- Firing positions/weapons
- Bases inc garrisons/training camp
- Checkpoints/observation posts/airfield
- IS fighters

Note: Figures based on information given in US Central Command daily reports, includes targets which were damaged but not destroyed
Source: US Central Command

Combined Forces Air Component Commander Airpower
Statistics As of 31 August 2014

- Operations in Iraq
  - Close Air Support
    - Sorties
      - 2014: 949
      - 2014: 100
    - Sorties with at least one weapon release
      - 2014: 211

- Number of Weapon Releases
  - Jan: 211
  - Feb: 211
  - Mar: 211
  - Apr: 211
  - May: 211
  - Jun: 211
  - Jul: 211
  - Aug: 211
  - Sep: 211
  - Oct: 211
  - Nov: 211
  - Dec: 211
  - Total: 211

- United States Air Forces Central Command
  - Combined Air and Space Operations Center

- Iraq
  - Intel, Surveillance and Recon Sorties: 332
  - Airlift and Airdrop Sorties: 162
  - Airlift and Airdrop Cargo (Short Tons): 1,735
  - Airlift Passengers: 570
  - Supplies Airdropped (Pounds): 910,000
  - Tanker Sorties: 675
  - Fuel Offloaded (Millions of Pounds): 4
  - Aircraft Refuelings: 3,971

- Some figures may have changed due to data re-calculation and re-verification
POC: AFCENT (CAOC) Public Affairs – DSN 318-436-1624
Combined Forces Air Component Commander Airpower
Statistics As of 30 September 2014

### Operations in Iraq and Syria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Close Air Support/Escort/Interdiction</th>
<th>Sorties</th>
<th>Sorties with at least one weapon release</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>1,871</td>
<td>280</td>
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### Number of Weapon Releases

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<th>Month</th>
<th>Less Activity</th>
<th>More Activity</th>
</tr>
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<td>Mar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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### United States Air Forces Central Command

#### Iraq and Syria Operations

<table>
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<tr>
<th>2014</th>
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<tr>
<td>Intel, Surveillance and Recon Sorties</td>
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<tr>
<td>Airlift and Airdrop Sorties*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Airlift and Airdrop Cargo (Short Tons)*</td>
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<td>Airlift Passengers*</td>
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<td>Supplies Airdropped (Pounds)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanker Sorties</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fuel Offloaded (Millions of Pounds)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aircraft Refuelings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Iraq only

- Some figures may have changed due to data re-calculation and re-verification

POC: AFCENT (CAOC) Public Affairs – DSN 318-436-1624
Air Strikes in Anbar: 13-14.10.14

Base near Hit seized on Monday

Base captured in early October

Base taken in late September


Source: http://apps.washingtonpost.com/g/page/world/islamic-state-advances/1376/
Key Battles in Syria and Iraq: to 14.10.14

Iraqi and Syrian Towns and Cities seized by the Islamic State and its allies
By The Long War Journal

Red = Islamic State (formerly ISIS) and allied groups, control or heavily contested
Yellow = Recent clashes
Blue = Status uncertain
Green = Kurdish Forces

Source: Adapted from: Google, https://maps.google.com/maps/ms?msid=206503076099972915830.0004fb81021906110e889&msa=0&ll=34.912962,41.143799&spn=5.395093,11.45874&dg=feature
Air Strikes in Syria and Iraq: 8.8.14-15.10.14

Air Strikes in Syria and Iraq: As of 15.10.14

Confirmed air strikes
Since 8 August 2014

Iraq 292
Syria 189

100 km
50 miles

Source: Institute for the Study of War, US Central Command

Air Strikes in Syria and Iraq: As of 4.11.14

Confirmed air strikes since 8 August 2014

Iraq 407
Syria 311

Note: Strikes have not been mapped when the precise location was not given or was unclear.

- US warship
- IS control
- IS support

Kurdistan Government control

Source: Institute for the Study of War, US Central Command

Conflict in Syria: 8.11.14

Air Strikes in Syria and Iraq: 8.8.14-7.11.14

First four months of air strikes in Iraq and Syria

Source: US Central Command

Air Strikes in Syria and Iraq: As of 7.11.14

Confirmed air strikes since 8 August 2014

Iraq 439
Syria 352

Note: Strikes have not been mapped when the precise location was not given or was unclear.

- US warship
- IS control
- IS support

Source: Institute for the Study of War, US Central Command

Iraqi Force Retake Bajii Refinery: 14.11.14

Air Strikes in Syria and Iraq: As of 28.11.14

Confirmed air strikes since 8 August 2014

Iraq 551  Syria 432

Note: Strikes have not been mapped when the precise location was not given or was unclear.

- US warship
- IS control
- IS support
- Kurdistan Government control

Source: Institute for the Study of War, US Central Command

Combined Forces Air Component Commander Airpower Statistics As of 30 November 2014

Operation Inherent Resolve

Close Air Support/Escort/Interdiction

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sorties</th>
<th>Sorties with at least one weapon release</th>
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<td>2014</td>
<td>5,136</td>
<td>981</td>
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Number of Weapon Releases

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<th>Feb</th>
<th>Mar</th>
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<th>Jul</th>
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<th>Sep</th>
<th>Oct</th>
<th>Nov</th>
<th>Dec</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>760</td>
<td>1,641</td>
<td>1,407</td>
<td>4,019</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Some figures may have changed due to data re-calculation and re-verification

POC: AFCENT (CAOC) Public Affairs – DSN 318-436-1624
Rebels Formalize New Command Structure: The formation of a new joint military command for the Syrian opposition has somewhat offset the setback suffered by moderate rebels due to JN’s continued consolidation of direct control in northwestern Syria. 72 rebel groups including prominent members of the Islamic Front, the Free Syrian Army, and several groups believed to receive western backing in the form of U.S. TOW missiles formally established the Syrian Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) on November 29. The new body is independent from the defunct Free Syrian Army Supreme Military Command, and may prove effective in reconsolidating rebel forces, albeit with an increased role of Islamist groups such as Jaysh al-Islam that have a history of hardline positions. Statements by the council’s founding leaders after the initiative was first declared in August indicated that the RCC did not constitute an attempt to sideline JN or counter its role within the opposition. It therefore remains unclear whether this rebel consolidation will impact JN’s influence within the Syrian opposition.

ISIS Reinvigorates Ayn al-Arab Offensive: ISIS launched two significant attacks against YPG forces in Ayn al-Arab/Kobani. Although neither attack made concrete gains, the deployment of valuable resources such as multiple SVBIEDs and Chechen fighters believed to comprise an elite ISIS unit indicates that ISIS may still view Ayn al-Arab as a primary line of effort despite recent tactical setbacks and the ongoing coalition air campaign.

Iranian Support Allows Regime to Advance in Dera’a: The visible role adopted by IRGC, Lebanese Hezbollah, and Iraqi Shi’i militia fighters in the regime’s offensive against Sheikh Miskin in Dera’a province signals a deepening reliance on Iranian support to its military campaign. This is indicated by tensions in Qalamoun between Hezbollah and regime NDF militias that there may be a limit to Hezbollah’s willingness to deepen its involvement in the regime’s campaign, and it is possible that IRGC or Iranian-backed Iraqi Shi’i militias would be leveraged to fill manpower requirements. A statement by a U.S. defense official on December 2 shed light on Iran’s deepening regional involvement, conﬁrming that Iran is conducting airstrikes against ISIS in Iraq within the same airspace used by the U.S.-led anti-ISIS coalition. It is possible this cooperation could extend to Syria, where coalition airstrikes against ISIS in Raqqa have occurred in close proximity to strikes ostensibly conducted by the regime on the same day on at least two occasions. Iranian support to the regime’s air campaign would likely greatly assist in offsetting the regime’s considerable manpower shortages, especially in eastern and southern Syria.
Air Strikes in Syria and Iraq: As of 3.12.14

Confirmed air strikes
Since 8 December 2014

Iraq 636  Syria 492

Note: Strikes have not been mapped when the precise location was not given or was unclear:

- US warship
- IS control
- IS support
- Kurdistan Government control

Source: Institute for the Study of War, US Central Command

Air Strikes in Syria and Iraq: As of 8.12.14

The US-led coalition has launched more than 600 air strikes against Islamic State (IS) militant targets in Iraq since the campaign began on 8 August. The US, with Bahrain, Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, has also carried out almost 500 attacks on IS in neighbouring Syria since 23 September.

As part of the coalition campaign, US forces have also targeted an alleged network of al-Qaeda veterans named Khorasan, based west of Aleppo, who were reportedly plotting imminent attacks against the West.

The UK launched its first air strikes against IS targets in Iraq on 30 September - four days after Parliament approved military action.

*Up to 8 December

Source: US Central Command

Iraq Situation Report: December 16-17, 2014

4 On December 16, Commander of Salah al-Din Operations Command (SOC), General Abdul-Wahab al-Sadi, stated that all of Baiji is secured after security forces cleared some "pockets" of ISIS. He denied reports that ISIS besieged tribal fighters in the center of the district. Baiji tribal leader Ghaith al-Neefi, of the Qasimi tribe, had urged the SOC Command to PM Haidar al-Abadi to break ISIS siege on members of his tribe. On December 17, an anonymous source contradicted the above report, stating that ISIS besieged 100 members of the Bani Khalid tribe and tribal fighters in an unspecified area in Baiji for 10 days and reportedly took control of Aini neighborhood in central Baiji. The source added that security forces clashed with ISIS in central Baiji today but the forces withdrew to the southern Baiji after they ran low on ammunition.

5 On December 16, an Iraqi Army (IA) commando, Colonel Salam Nadhim, stated that U.S. forces along their "Iraqi partners" clashed with a force from the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) for two hours in the Dulah area located between Hit district and Asad base in western Anbar province. Tribal leaders, Mahmoud al-Ninawi, stated that U.S. forces intervened in self-defense because of ISIS proximity to the base. He described U.S. forces as "a special force" and that ISIS "withdrew" from the area after the clashes. Ninawi added that the forces withdrew back to Asad base and that the U.S. "promised to supply tribal fighters in this area only with weapons." These reports have not been confirmed by the U.S. Department of Defense.

6 On December 17, an anonymous security source stated that "unidentified gunmen" targeted two water drainage with IEDs on the highway between Allu Raka area northwest of Ramadi and the area known as the "7 KM" located southwest of Ramadi. The source added that the explosion resulted in the closure of the highway.

7 On December 16, an anonymous security source stated that "gunmen" targeted three vehicles opened fire on Mol patrols in Bak al-Sharaqi, central Baghdad. He added that members of the patrol injured one of the gunmen and arrested three others, seizing their vehicles.

8 On December 16, ISIS reportedly cut a fiber optics cable used to supply Mosul with Internet in Bashiqa sub-district, northwest of Mosul. On December 17, a local source from Mossel reported that ISIS arrested a number of Mosul residents for attempting to use their cellphones, utilizing high ground to pick up signals from other areas. Another report indicated that ISIS arrested residents for using their cellphones in the Arabi, Shalkali, and the Tribal Bridge areas.

The Iraqi Kurdish Peshmerga launched operations in western Nineveh province that indicate the possibility of operations to clear the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) from Sinjar district. Any impending operations in Sinjar will impact the desire of the Iraqi Kurdish leadership to preserve the integrity of Sinjar which is the most significant area that fell to ISIS in August when it made a push towards Peshmerga-controlled areas in Nineveh province. It is also important to note the reports of Counter-Terrorism Service (CTS) forces collaborating with the Peshmerga to target ISIS. Both forces collaborated in August to clear the Mosul Dam and, if true, this could be an indication of further collaboration in any operations to clear Mosul. ISIS continues to challenge the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and anti-ISIS tribes in the Baiji area in northern Iraq which was cleared in mid-November. Reports continue to conflict about the exact situation, but these developments mean that it will be difficult for the ISF to make a push north of Baiji to areas south of Mosul.

Syria Update: December 16-23, 2014

1. December 22: A number of Iranian cargo planes landed at the Deir ez-Zour Military Airbase with military reinforcements amidst an ongoing ISIS offensive to penetrate the airbase. Clashes are ongoing, with reports that ISIS killed a regime Brigadier General during the fighting.

2. December 11: The Syrian regime approved the delivery of medicine and surgical supplies by the World Health Organization to Aleppo (a) and the Damascus suburbs of Muadamiya and Eastern Ghouta (b).


4. December 17: An IED exploded in Idlib city, wounding a number of civilians, as rebel forces launched a number of mortars and RPGs at the city.

5. December 21: The al-Muthanna Islamic Movement formed a joint Shari’a committee along with the al-Habib Muhammad Brigade and the Fatah al-Sham Operations Room in a renewed attempt to mediate the ongoing conflict between JN and the Yarmouk Martyrs Brigade after the brigade allegedly pledged allegiance to ISIS.

6. December 18: ISIS executed a local rebel commander in the Qalamoun region on the Lebanese border after he refused to pledge allegiance to ISIS, prompting clashes with local rebel forces in multiple areas of Qalamoun.

7. December 17: Three rebel brigades announced their withdrawal from the PSA-affiliated Jaish al-Mujahideen in Aleppo Province and formed an independent entity.

8. December 18: A car bomb detonated in the ISIS-controlled city of al-Mayadin, eastern Deir ez-Zor Province. In addition, a large explosion suspected to be an IED occurred in the ISIS-controlled town of Abu Kamal near the Iraq border.

9. December 17: An IED detonated inside the vehicle of the regime’s Hasaka military commander in Hasaka city, causing several injuries. Meanwhile, a suspected car bomb detonated in the Jassu’a region near the Yarubiyyah border crossing with Iraq.

Background Kinetic Activity
- Opposition Forces
- Pro-Regime Forces
- ISIS
- Jabhat al-Nusra (JN)
- ISF
- Execution
- IED
- Major Clash
- Car Bomb
- SVEST
- Anti-ISIS Coalition Air Strikes
- Major Regime Air Strikes
- VBED

ISIS Suffers Attacks in Deir ez-Zour Countrywide: Local resistance to ISIS in Deir ez-Zour has occurred on a limited scale since ISIS seized control of the province in July 2014. However, a recent increase in VBEDs and IEDs targeting central ISIS-held towns in the province may indicate a growing resistance to ISIS. Alternatively, the attacks may be the work of irregular regime forces in an attempt to inflict damage deeper into the ISIS interior in order to relieve pressure on the Deir ez-Zour Military Airbase. Either way, the attacks signify that ISIS cannot fully police its internal terrain, and may threaten ISIS’s legitimacy by challenging its ability to provide security to residents living under the terms of its caliphate.

JN and Rebel Forces Close Ranks in Daraa: In Concern over ISIS Expansion: JN’s immediate escalation in response to reports that the Yarmouk Martyrs Brigade had defected to ISIS in Daraa indicates JN’s concern over an ISIS incursion into the province. An effective defection of local rebels to ISIS would likely threaten the integrity of rebel forces in the province and lead to further frictions within rebel ranks. JN’s response to date indicates it is likely to continue to consolidate and deepen its own influence within rebel ranks in an attempt to offset continued ISIS expansion. The leading involvement of Hasaka al-Muthanna al-Islamiyya in forming a Shari’a mediation committee to negotiate the conflict between JN and the Yarmouk Martyrs Brigade is an important example of the instrumental role JN’s closest “Tier 1” rebel allies can play in maintaining JN’s wider network of relationships with rebel brigades amidst fears of ISIS expansion.

Iranian Support Allows the Regime to Hold onto the Deir ez-Zour Military Airbase: Iranian support to the regime’s defense of the Deir ez-Zour Military Airbase indicates the strategic importance of the regime’s foothold in the province and may signify widening direct Iranian involvement to support the regime’s war effort. Furthermore, following the JN and rebel secession of the Wadi al-Daif and Harmatiya military bases in Idlib Province on December 14-16, an additional loss of key military terrain by the regime in Deir ez-Zour could greatly exacerbate mounting frustration in the pro-regime camp. As the regime continues its effort to restructure its irregular forces and to replenish its ranks with conscripts and reservists, a heightened level of Iranian involvement may be required to protect critical regime territories.

The US-led coalition has launched about 800 air strikes against Islamic State (IS) militant targets in Iraq since the campaign began on 8 August.

The US, with Bahrain, Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, has also carried out more than 550 attacks on IS in neighbouring Syria since 23 September.

As part of the coalition campaign, US forces have also targeted an alleged network of al-Qaeda veterans named Khorasan, based west of Aleppo, who were reportedly plotting imminent attacks against the West.

The UK launched its first air strikes against IS targets in Iraq on 30 September - four days after Parliament approved military action.

# Syria Update: December 23-30, 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 26</td>
<td>The commander of the Yarmouk Martyrs Brigade reportedly turned himself in to theDar al-Adl Sharia court in Derar in compliance with an agreement concluded with JN. Both sides had agreed to a mediation effort led by Harakat al-Muthana al-Islamiyya through the Dar al-Adl Sharia Court. After JN attacked the Yarmouk Martyrs Brigade following reports of its defection to ISIS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 29</td>
<td>ISIS bombarded regime checkpoints near the town of al-Sehbeh in Deir al-Safina and the offices housing areas in the town of al-Wafay near the Sufra defense factories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 23</td>
<td>JN seized the headquarters of a local rebel group named Liwa Uqab al-Islam in the northeastern countryside of Hama Province after the group pledged allegiance to ISIS. The group’s commander reportedly escaped to ISIS-held terrain in the eastern countryside of Homs Province.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 25</td>
<td>Five major military factions in Aleppo city, including the Islamic Front, Jaysh al-Mujahideen, and Harakat Nouz al-Din al-Zenki, united in a new military council entitled the “Sham Front.” The front is led by Liwa al-Tawhid commander Abdul-Aziz al-Salam, who is also the general commander for Islamic Front forces in Aleppo Province.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 24-25</td>
<td>ISIS forces clashed with both Kurdish YPG and regime NDF forces southeast of Qamishl near Hasaka Province. This occurred amid an ISIS withdrawal from Iraq into southeastern Hasaka Province following heavy clashes with Kurdish Peshmerga forces in northern Iraq. Regime forces allegedly used chlorine gas along with heavy bombardment to prevent an ISIS seizure of villages near Qamishl.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 30</td>
<td>JN seized a Harakat Hazm headquarters in the Kafar Kamin area in the western countryside of Aleppo after releasing a statement on December 25 accusing Harakat Hazm of being a “client group” that promotes “western interests” and stating that it has worked to sabotage JN operations in Idlib and Aleppo. In addition, JN rejected the De Mistura “freeze plan” for Aleppo City.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 29</td>
<td>ISIS detonated a Suicide Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Device (SVBIED) followed by a Suicide Vest (SVVEST) at the Fuerqas gas plant in eastern Homs Province, killing nine, following unconfirmed reports of ISIS massing near the town of al-Sukhna.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 24</td>
<td>ISIS captured a Jordanian pilot after his F-16 warplane crashed near ar-Raqqa city while conducting an overflight for the anti-ISIS coalition air campaign. U.S. CENTCOM confirmed the pilot is in ISIS captivity and denied any ISIS claim to have downed the aircraft with surface-to-air fire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 25</td>
<td>Ahrar al-Sham, the Furqan Brigades, the Syrian Revolutionaries Front, and several other rebel groups announced the Battle of “Bury the Sekhedah” in Quneitra Province targeting the regime-held town of Jaba in the southeast of regime-held Bara City. Rebels made initial gains, but the offensive appears to have stalled.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Background Kinetic Activity

- **Anti-ISIS Coalition Airstrikes**
- **Low-level clashes**
- **Major Regime Airstrikes**
- **ISIS**
- **SVBIED**
- **SVVEST**
- **U.S-Led Coalition**
- **Named Operation**
- **YPG**
- **Jabhat al-Nusra (JN)**
- **Major Clash**
- **ISWS Mobilizes in Northern and Central Syria**: ISIS forces in northern and central Syria appear to be mobilizing as ISIS fighters ousted by the Iraqi Peshmerga from areas in Iraq’s Nineveh Province attempt to regroup in Hasaka Province. ISIS bombardment of regime positions southeast of Aleppo City near Safa may seek to test regime defenses in the area, yet likely also serve as cover for an ISIS mobilization, possibly in preparation for a final assault against the besieged Kuwaitis military airbase. Meanwhile, the reported growing ISIS presence near al-Sukhna, east of Palmyra in Homs Province, follows a gradual build-up of ISIS presence in the eastern countryside of Homs. Repeated attacks against regime gas facilities in this zone serve to fix regime forces away from other crucial terrain and may serve as a shaping operation for a future ISIS attack against military targets east of Homs, including the Tailor Military Airbase and the heavily fortified regime stronghold of Palmyra. **Rebel Forces Unify in Aleppo**: The unification of major military factions in Aleppo City into the Sham Front is a crucial step forward in the continued defense of Aleppo City by rebel forces. Including both prominent FSA affiliates and the Islamic Front, the Sham Front is also a key achievement for the Revolutionary Command Council by uniting local forces in an attempt to improve the effectiveness of coordinated military operations. The Sham Front’s establishment follows the formation of a wider “Joint Aleppo Operations Room” and therefore bolsters a growing effort to strengthen rebel unity in the defense of the city. While JN and its primary Salafi Jihadist ally Jabhat Anwar al-Din are not signatories to either of these structures, they continue to contribute key military efforts to the rebel defense of the city. The increasing consolidation of rebel forces is therefore unlikely to sideline either of these elements in the short term. **Regime Forces Defend Remaining Stronghold in Quneitra**: Regime forces continue to be successful in defending remaining regime-held terrain in the northeastern corner of Quneitra Province. While rebel forces have seized wide swaths of the province since early September 2014, regime forces appear to have drawn a stable defense line at al-Brith City and its surrounding countryside.
Combined Forces Air Component Commander Airpower Statistics As of 31 December 2014

Operation Inherent Resolve

Close Air Support/Escort/Interdiction

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2014</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sorties</td>
<td>6,981</td>
<td>Sorties with at least one weapon release</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>1,411</td>
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Number of Weapon Releases

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Jan</th>
<th>Feb</th>
<th>Mar</th>
<th>Apr</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>Jun</th>
<th>Jul</th>
<th>Aug</th>
<th>Sep</th>
<th>Oct</th>
<th>Nov</th>
<th>Dec</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>760</td>
<td>1,641</td>
<td>1,407</td>
<td>1,867</td>
<td>5,886</td>
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- Intel, Surveillance and Recon Sorties: 2,164
- Airlift and Airdrop Sorties: 1,992
- Airlift Cargo (Short Tons)*: 14,555
- Airlift Passengers*: 9,900
- Supplies Airdropped (Pounds): 1,417,900
- Tanker Sorties: 4,828
- Fuel Offloaded (Millions of Pounds): 282
- Aircraft Refuelings: 28,956

* Iraq only

Some figures may have changed due to data re-calculation and re-verification.
How the Air Campaign Against ISIS Grew

The American-led air campaign against the Islamic State began as a limited operation, but quickly grew into what officials said will be a multi-year effort to destroy the group that will require local forces on the ground.

Source: http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/03/12/world/middleeast/syria-civil-war-after-four-years-map.html
Flow of Foreign Fighters to Syria: 4.2.15

Foreign fighters flow to Syria

Since Oct. 2014 ICSR report:
- Total fighters
- Additional fighters

Country from which citizens or residents have reportedly gone to fight.

The number of foreign fighters joining the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq now exceeds 20,000, up from the 15,000 estimated last October. According to ICSR, nearly a fifth of the fighters come from Western European nations.

Note: Figures of fighters from Western Europe are from the ICSR high estimate category. All other numbers are from the Soufan Group. Per-country fighter estimates determined from a date range of December 2013 to the second half of 2014.

Source: International Center for the Study of Radicalization and Political Violence (ICSR), The Soufan Group, OA

Gene Thorp and Swati Sharma/The Washington Post
January 3 - 4: Jaysh al-Islam seized dozens of Jaysh al-Umma positions in Eastern Ghouta and arrested several of the group’s leaders in an alleged “anti-corruption” campaign, forcing several hundred Jaysh al-Umma fighters to surrender. Three other rebel groups in Eastern Ghouta - including Ahrar al-Sham - released a joint statement denying direct participation in the operation. Jaysh al-Islam’s campaign follows the assassination of two Jaysh al-Umma commanders by unknown gunmen on January 3.

December 29 – January 5: YPG forces advanced in central and southern Ayn al-Arab, seizing several ISIS positions including the government square area and killing senior ISIS spiritual leader Othman al-Nazith. SOHR reported that ISIS militants deployed two SVBIEDs and a unit of ten fighters wearing SVESTS during overnight clashes on December 29-30.

January 2: Three FSA-affiliated rebel groups in Deir ezzor Province - the Syrian Revolutionaries Front (SFR), the Hamza Brigades, and the 1st Artillery Regiment - announced their union as the FSA First Army.

December 28: ISIS arrested the commander of the ISIS-allied rebel ‘Allahu Akbar’ Brigade in Albu Kamal after he refused to carry out orders to deploy fighters under his command to Iraq. Members of the brigade reportedly clashed with other ISIS militants on the outskirts of Albu Kamal after learning that their commander had been detained.

December 30 – January 1: Islamic Front members Jaysh al-Islam and Ahrar al-Sham launched over 50 Grad rockets at regime positions near Latakia, striking several agricultural areas on the outskirts of the city. The rockets were allegedly captured by the Wadi al-Dar military base in southern Idlib Province.

January 5: Turkish MIT intelligence agents recovered a Turkish soldier who had gone missing in Turkey’s Kilis Province on January while conducting cross-border anti-smuggling operations into Syria’s Aleppo Province. Local media reported that the soldier had been kidnapped by ISIS militants, but the Turkish military did not confirm the identity of his captors.

January 31 - January 1: Syrian President Bashar al-Assad allegedly paid a New Year’s Eve visit to SAA soldiers in the Jobar neighborhood of eastern Damascus amidst heavy ongoing clashes between regime and rebel forces in the area. Meanwhile, on January 1, the majority of rebel groups operating in Jobar reportedly unified into a single military body named “Jund al-A’laim” (Soldiers of the Capital).

January 2: Dozens of local residents protested against rebel leaders in the besieged al-Waer neighborhood of Homs City and reportedly attacked the headquarters of the neighborhood’s Shart’a authority. Some activists reported that the protesters called for ISIS to enter the neighborhood.

December 31: The Baghara tribal federation in Deir ezzor Province claimed to be prepared to deploy up to 100,000 tribal fighters against ISIS following the abduction of three sons of Baghara head Sheikh Nawaal al-Bashir. Meanwhile, ISIS continued a campaign of arrests and property seizures targeting former opposition leaders in the province.

Anti-ISIS Tensions Rise in Deir Ezzor Province: ISIS has relied on the submission and occasional participation of rebel groups and Sunni tribes to maintain its control over large swaths of Deir ezzor Province, but these negotiated agreements appear to be coming under strain as ISIS shifts its force posture in the province from a phase of consolidation to one of enforcement. In parallel to ISIS strategy regarding Sunni tribal leaders in Iraq, ISIS forces have enacted an arrest-and-intimidation campaign in Deir ezzor targeting influential figures representing potential sources of opposition to ISIS. Reports regarding the insubordination of the ‘Allahu Akbar’ Brigade, which nominally falls under ISIS command, as well as the apparent violation of ISIS political truce with the al-Baghara tribal federation suggest that this heavy-handed approach may exacerbate anti-ISIS sentiment in the province. However, it is unclear whether this will translate to heightened anti-ISIS activity in light of the display of heavy force brought by ISIS against active resistance during the Shtat tribal uprising in late summer 2014.

Jaysh al-Islam Consolidates Power in Eastern Ghouta: Jaysh al-Islam’s seizure of Jaysh al-Umma positions and leadership effectively eliminates a competitor to Jaysh al-Islam in Eastern Ghouta and continues Jaysh al-Islam leader Zahran Allouch’s consolidation of direct control in the Damascus area. The strike against Jaysh al-Umma was framed as an anti-corruption operation, echoing language commonly used by JN in its campaigns against moderate rebel groups in northern Syria. This unilateral action by Jaysh al-Islam may threaten the stability of the Eastern Ghouta Unified Command, of which Jaysh al-Umma was also a member. However, prominent groups in the Unified Command released a joint statement reaffirming their commitment to the Command while simultaneously distancing themselves from the operation against Jaysh al-Umma.

Regime Forces Under Pressure in the Qalamoun: Successful rebel operations targeting pre-emptive checkpoints near Falita suggests that JN, ISIS, and FSA-affiliated rebel groups operating in the Qalamoun may be intensifying their operations in the region. The continuation of this trend could directly threaten key Hezbollah and regime supply lines north of Damascus along the Lebanese border.
Estimate of Casualties in Syria: As of 1.1.15

Syria conflict death toll
Documented killings per month

Number of sources for each killing ▶️ 4 ▹ 3 ▲ 2 ▼ 1

Aid agency estimated total (Mar 2015)
220,000

Sources: Violations Documentation Center, Syrian Shuhada, Syrian Network for Human Rights, Syrian Center for Statistics and Research, Failing Syria aid agency report

Air Strikes in Syria and Iraq: As of 5.1.15

Confirmed air strikes
Up to 4 January 2015

Iraq 880  Syria 665

Note: Strikes have not been mapped when the precise location was not given or was unclear.

- US warship
- IS control
- IS support
- Kurdistan Government-administered

Source: Institute for the Study of War, US Central Command

Air Strikes in Syria and Iraq: As of 4.1.15

The US-led coalition has launched almost 900 air strikes against Islamic State (IS) militant targets in Iraq since the campaign began on 8 August.

The US, with Bahrain, Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, has also carried out more than 660 attacks on IS in neighbouring Syria since 23 September.

As part of the coalition campaign, US forces have also targeted an alleged network of al-Qaeda veterans named Khorasan, based west of Aleppo, who were reportedly plotting imminent attacks against the West.

The UK launched its first air strikes against IS targets in Iraq on 30 September - four days after Parliament approved military action.

*Figs are up to 4 January
Source: US Central Command

### Relevant ISIS Events

| January 1-17: | ISIS withdraws from most of Idlib and Aleppo Provinces |
| February 20: | ISIS claims presence in Babila |
| March 4: | ISIS claims presence in Yarmouk |
| April 11: | ISIS begins Deir ez-Zour offensive |
| June 10: | Fall of Mosul |
| June 11: | ISIS driven out of Murayta |
| June 12: | ISIS driven out of Anbar |
| July 1: | ISIS driven out of Yalda |
| July 2: | ISIS agrees to withdraw to al-Sham and Hajar al-Aswad |
| August 13-16: | ISIS signs non-aggression pact with rebels |
| September 12: | ISIS forces attack Jaysh al-Islam in Bir al-Qasab |
| October 2: | ISIS seizes Hit in Anbar Province, Iraq |
| November 20: | ISIS delivers ultimatum to rebel groups in the Qalamoun region |
| December 10: | ISIS delivers ultimatum to rebel groups in the Qalamoun region |

### Relevant Syrian Civil War Events

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<tr>
<td>February 13:</td>
<td>Truce in Qalamoun</td>
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<td>February 17:</td>
<td>Truce in Babila, Beit Sahem, Yalda, Yarmouk</td>
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<td>March 3:</td>
<td>Yarmouk truce breaks down</td>
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<td>March 8:</td>
<td>Regime launches offensive against Mleiha</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 3:</td>
<td>Regime launches offensive against Mleiha</td>
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<td>June 13:</td>
<td>Jaysh al-Islam declares breaking the Walls of Damascus offensive in Jaber</td>
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<td>July 1-18:</td>
<td>JN withdraws from Deir ez-Zour Province amid ISIS advance</td>
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<td>August 2-7:</td>
<td>Battle of Arsal, Lebanon</td>
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<td>September 23:</td>
<td>Coalition airstrikes begin in Syria</td>
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<td>October 26:</td>
<td>Clashes begin between JN and the SDF in Aleppo Province</td>
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<td>November 1-30:</td>
<td>JN expels the SDF and Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham from Idlib Province</td>
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<td>December 1:</td>
<td>Eastern Qalamoun joint operations room and leadership council announced</td>
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### Additional Notes

1. Assad al-Islam pledges allegiance to ISIS in northern Homs
2. JN accuses Liwa Shuhada Yarmouk of pledging allegiance to ISIS, sparking clashes
3. JN clashes with rebel forces near Qunaytayn in the Eastern Qalamoun
4. Jaysh al-Islam claims ISIS expelled from Bir al-Qasab/Lajat area
Syria Update: January 6-12, 2015

January 10: A double suicide attack (SVEST) occurred at the Omran cafe in the Alawite-majority Jabal Mohsen neighborhood of Tripoli, killing 9 and wounding 30. JN claimed credit for the attack, and stated that it targeted the National Democratic Party, an Alawite political movement with ties to the Syrian regime. In the aftermath of the attack, the Lebanese Internal security forces conducted a raid into the notorious “B Block” of Rumeihieh prison after reportedly gathering intelligence that a number of prisoners were connected to the attack. Commenting on the Rumeihieh raid, Lebanon’s Interior minister Nohad al-Mashnouq implicated ISIS rather than JN in the attack.

January 6: The JN-affiliated Daar al-Qadaa courthouse in Aleppo Province disbanded police stations in the towns of Huraytan, Aradan, and Kafir Hamra, accusing the stations of receiving support from foreign bodies.

January 6: ISIS released a video titled “A Message from the Muslims to the Family of the Pilot” containing interviews with residents of ISIS-controlled areas in Syria calling for the execution of captured Jordanian fighter pilot Muath al-Kasaabeh.

January 8: A group of young Druze men attacked the local regime recruitment division in the town of Saikhd in Suwayda Province in order to free a young man who had been detained for compulsory military service.

January 7: An IED destroyed the historic tomb of Imam al-Nawawi in the town of Nawa, west of Sheikh Miskin in Dera’a Province. The regime and local activists both accused JN of conducting the bombing; JN denied involvement and claimed the attack was conducted in an attempt to create a rift between JN and local residents.

January 10: Two VBIEDs and one IED detonated in Aleppo province, targeting JN, the Kurdish YPG and Harakat Hazrn. One of the VBIEDs targeted a JN checkpoint north of Aleppo city, killing thirteen. JN claimed that ISIS conducted the attack, taking advantage of JN’s operation against Nebul and Zahra. A second VBIED detonated at a YPG checkpoint near Afrin, killing five. In addition, an IED detonated in a car in Darat Izza, killing a Harakat Hazrn commander.

January 12: An IED targeted an ISIS Hisba patrol vehicle, killing five, in the town of al-Asara southeast of Deir ez-Zor city. Following the attack, armed ISIS elements spread throughout the city, setting up roadblocks and searching cars.

January 11: U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) admitted responsibility for a previously unclaimed strike on an ISIS building in al-Bab on December 28, 2014. Local activists claim the attack killed 50 civilians, however a CENTCOM spokesperson said that the U.S. was unaware of civilian casualties incurred in the strike.

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January 11: Kurdish residents of Armuta, west of Qamishli in Hasaka Province, held a demonstration protesting the conscription of minors for service in YPG forces following the conscription of a 16-year-old schoolgirl in the town.

JN Conducts a Double Suicide Attack in Tripoli: JN appears to be increasing its pressure on supporters of the Assad regime in Lebanon. The double suicide attack (SVEST) attack in Lebanon’s northern city of Tripoli marks the first serious breach of a security plan implemented by the Lebanese Armed Forces in June of 2014 following tension between Alawite and Sunni communities connected to opposing sides of the war in Syria. The attack follows a warning issued by JN leader Mohammed al-Jouliani in November 2014 that “the true enemy in Lebanon has not actually begun, and what is coming Allah willing, is worse and more bitter for Hezbollah.” While the attack did not target Hezbollah forces or supporters, it targeted the National Democratic Party, an Alawite political organization with ties to the Assad regime. The statement by the Lebanese Interior Minister may indicate cooperation between ISIS and JN in conducting the attack; however ISIS has issued no formal claim of participation.

The Regime Continues to Foment Unrest through Conscription: Unrest continues to build in the Druze area of Suwayda Province as the regime continues to conscript young men for military service despite statements of protest by Druze leaders. If this trend continues, the regime may risk losing critical elements of support from within the Druze community, which may provide an increasing advantage to rebel forces combating the regime in southern Dera’a Province. Regime forces remain unsuccessful in changing the momentum in southern Syria, where rebel forces with the participation of JN continue to make gains against regime stronghold.
Although ISIS was driven from large parts of Damascus city into its last remaining stronghold of Hajar al-Aswad, ISIS militants have recently begun to reassert their presence in the surrounding areas. ISIS has also intensified its activities against rebel forces in the Bir al-Qassab and Lajat regions, southeast of Damascus, as well as the Eastern Qalamoun region northeast of the city – potentially setting the conditions for future ISIS expansion in the area.
ISIS forces in Hajar al-Aswad have so far refrained from directly engaging rebel forces in the surrounding neighborhoods, although they continually clash with regime forces on the district’s southern and western fronts. However, ISIS Wilayat Dimashq has begun to promote ISIS governance activities in Hajar al-Aswad and claimed renewed presence in the al-Zein neighborhood, adjacent to Yalda.
Syria Update: January 6-12, 2015

1 January 10: A double suicide vest (SVEST) attack occurred at the Omran cafe in the Alawite-majority Jabal Mohsen neighborhood of Tripoli, killing 9 and wounding 30. JN claimed credit for the attack, and stated that it targeted the National Democratic Party, an Alawite political movement with ties to the Syrian regime. In the aftermath of the attack, the Lebanese internal security forces conducted a raid into the notorious “B Block” of Rumieh prison after reportedly gathering intelligence that a number of prisoners were connected to the attack. Commenting on the Rumieh raid, Lebanon’s Interior minister Nohad al-Mashouq has implicated ISIS rather than JN in the attack.


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6 January 8-9: JN launched a renewed offensive against the isolated regime enclave of Nebul and Zahrakh north of Aleppo City, claiming to shell the towns with over 500 mortars and heavy clashes with regime forces. Salafi-Jihadist group Jabhat Al-Nusra and other unidentified rebel groups participated in the attack, temporarily advancing into the outskirts of the towns before being forced to withdraw. The attack took advantage of a severe snowstorm to attack the enclave while the regime was unable to deploy air assets in support of regime forces defending the towns.

7 January 12: An IED targeted an ISIS Hisba patrol vehicle, killing five, in the town of al-Asara southeast of Deir ez-Zour city. Following the attack, armed ISIS elements spread throughout the city, setting up roadblocks and searching cars.

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10 January 11: Kurdish residents of Amuda, west of Qamishli in Hasaka Province, held a demonstration protesting the compulsory conscription of minors for service in YPG forces following the conscription of a 16-year-old schoolgirl in the town.

Background Kinetic Activity

- Opposition Forces
- Pro-Regime Forces
- ISIS
- YPG
- U.S.-Led Coalition
- Jabhat al-Nusra (JN)
- SVEST
- VBIED

Anti-ISIS Coalition Airstrikes
SVBIED

January 11: ISIS militants detonated a SVBIED near a YPG post near Safiya, north of Hasaka city

Content: Jennifer Cafarella
Graphic: Brian Fisher

VBIED Attacks in Aleppo May Signify Increased ISIS Aggression: The three attacks targeting JN, the YPG, and Harakat Hazm in Aleppo Province on January 10 may indicate an attempt by ISIS to disrupt rebel systems in Aleppo Province. ISIS may undertake such attacks as a conditions-setting operation for a renewed offensive against the JN and rebel-held town of Marea north of Aleppo City. Alternatively, the attack that killed a Harakat Hazm commander could have been conducted by JN, which has increased its direct aggression toward rebel forces since ousting the Syrian Revolutionaries Front (SRF) from the Jabal al-Zawiya area of Idlib Province. Continued attacks against JN and rebel forces in Aleppo may threaten the ability of anti-regime forces to maintain their resistance to the regime’s attempted encirclement of Aleppo City.

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Air Strikes in Syria and Iraq: As of 14.1.15

Air strikes in Iraq and Syria

Iraq 948  Syria 743

*Figs are up to 14 January
Source: US Central Command

Syria Update: January 13-19, 2015

January 16: ISS fighters seized several regime positions in northern Hasaka city following clashes with regime soldiers and national defense force (NDF) militiamen. Fighting reportedly began after regime units attempted to occupy a building in an area disputed between the two parties. Regime forces shelled YPG-held neighborhoods of the city, with the YPG alleging that regime forces also utilized cluster munitions.

January 17 – 19: YPG fighters seized several regime positions in northern Hasaka city following clashes with regime soldiers and national defense force (NDF) militiamen. Fighting reportedly began after regime units attempted to occupy a building in an area disputed between the two parties. Regime forces shelled YPG-held neighborhoods of the city, with the YPG alleging that regime forces also utilized cluster munitions.

January 12 – 14: ISIS reportedly deployed reinforcements from southeastern Hasaka province to areas in the northern countryside of Hasaka city, sparking increased clashes with regime forces northwest and northeast of the city.

January 15: JN launched an air strike against a house and several vehicles in the al-Amal Farms area, near the Golan Heights border in northern Quneitra province. The attack killed IRGC general Mohammad Allafadili in addition to Hezbollah commanders Abu Ali Tabatabai and Mohammad Issa, and four Hezbollah fighters including Jihad Mughniyeh. The UN increased patrols along the Israeli-Lebanon border in response.

January 15: JN released a statement warning residents of Eastern Ghouta that those sheltering or aiding members of ISIS will be punished “without mercy.” However, JN’s statement said that it will make efforts to avoid direct confrontation with the local population and militia groups that associate with ISIS.

January 16: Thousands of civilians held demonstrations across Syria protesting “offensive caricatures” of the Prophet Muhammad published by the French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo. JN published a video showing one such demonstration in Hama province following a JN-led Friday sermon.

January 18: Israeli Defense Forces launched an airstrike against a house and several vehicles in the al-Amal Farms area, near the Golan Heights border in northern Quneitra province. The attack killed IRGC general Mohammad Allafadili in addition to Hezbollah commanders Abu Ali Tabatabai and Mohammad Issa, and four Hezbollah fighters including Jihad Mughniyeh. The UN increased patrols along the Israeli-Lebanon border in response.

January 13 – 15: JN fighters reportedly withdrew from the Beit Sahem neighborhood of southern Damascus following two weeks of anti-JN demonstrations by local residents. Days later, regime forces allowed an aid convoy to enter the neighborhood as well as the adjacent Babilla neighborhood.

Background Kinetic Activity
- Major Barrel Bomb Attack
- Anti-ISIS Coalition Airstrikes
- YPG SVST
- Major Clash
- ISIF Execution
- ISIF Pro-Regime Airstrikes

ISIS Utilizes Hasaka as a Safe Haven and Staging Area for the Fight in Ninewa, Iraq: The report of an ISIS deployment of reinforcements to northern Hasaka province follows recent reports of ISIS activity withdrawing into the area following a Peshmerga and Iraq Security Forces (ISF) operation to clear the adjacent Sinjar district in Ninewa Province, Iraq. If it continues, the recent increase in tensions between the Syrian regime and YPG forces in Hasaka Province is likely to indicate an increasingly permissive environment for ISIS forces in the Hasaka countryside. As ISIS forces continue to come under pressure in western Ninewa Province, they are likely to utilize terrain in Hasaka province as a relative safe haven and staging ground for future attacks in the Sinjar area.

JN Pressures Last Regime Military Base in the Rebel-Held Countryside of Idlib: JN’s seizure of the town of Tel Safi, south of the Abu al-Dahr military base, likely indicates JN intent to launch a offensive against the base itself after JN and rebel forces captured the nearby Wadi al-Dahr and Hamadiya military bases on December 15, 2014. The Abu al-Dahr base is the last remaining regime-held base in eastern Idlib Province. While not historically a primary regime stronghold in the area, it is likely that regime forces relocated resources to the base after the fall of Wadi al-Dahr and Hamadiya to JN and rebel forces. An attack against the base would therefore cement a considerable blow to the regime in Idlib Province and garner further credibility for JN as an effective actor against Aasad.

Israeli Airstrike Sheds Light on Hezbollah Disposition in Syria: The Israeli airstrike that killed IRGC general Mohammad Ali Allafadili and several Hezbollah commanders is likely to establish further blow to the regime’s war effort. The strike likely did not target the IRGC command element of the force, although Jihadi Mughniyeh, son of late Hezbollah commander Imad Mughniyeh, may have been the intended target. The presence of Hezbollah and IRGC members in Quneitra, ostensibly in order to conduct a reconnaissance mission in the area, may indicate an increased level of involvement in the Syria regime’s military campaign in southern Syria. As the regime continues to suffer severe manpower shortages, it may require deepening Hezbollah involvement in southern Syria in order to bolster the momentum of JN and rebel forces in Dera’a and Quneitra provinces. Israeli strikes have generally targeted the movement of weapons near its borders rather than specific individuals, however an increased level of Hezbollah activity in the Quneitra region may be perceived as sufficiently threatening to provoke an expansion of Israeli strikes.

http://iswsyria.blogspot.com/2015/01/syria-update-january-6-12-2015.html
Air Strikes in Syria and Iraq: As of 27.1.15

Confirmed air strikes
Up to 26 January 2015

Iraq 1070  Syria 839

Note: Strikes have not been mapped when the precise location was not given or was unclear.

- IS control
- IS support

Kurdistan Government-administered

Source: Institute for the Study of War, US Central Command

Air Strikes in Syria and Iraq: As of 27.1.15

Air strikes in Iraq and Syria

Iraq 1070  Syria 839

*Figs are up to 26 January
Source: US Central Command

Iraq: As of 14-16. 2.15 II

1. On February 14, unidentified gunmen kidnapped a member Zaid al-Janabi and his uncle Saleh Qasim Suwaidi, a tribal leader of the Janabi tribe, in addition to eight of their bodyguards on the road between Baghdad and Al-Mahmudiyah, south of Baghdad. The gunmen burnt Zaid al-Janabi severely before releasing him, but the bodies of the sheikh and the guards were found under the Shub Bridge in northeastern Baghdad.

2. On February 14, a security source reported that IS killed Zaid al-Janabi and seven others. Clashes in Baghdad also killed commander of the 27th Brigade Colonel Mohamed Fikha. IS kidnapped 24 individuals from the Obeidi and Khuza Nine tribes in Baghdad, including nine IP members, and besieged the government complex. Another report indicated that IS envelopes were found near Dhuha. On February 15, a report indicated that IS arrested the residential compound and cut the water supply after taking control of the water treatment plant of the compound. In addition, IS kidnapped 28 IP members, killing three of them and transferring the others to Kawa and Tiq in addition to seizing a number of military vehicles and weapons. This incident may be the same as the kidnapping reported by the previous Iraq Forces from the IA and IA Special Operations Forces (SOF) alongside two armored battalions stormed Baghdad from three areas on February 15 and reportedly broke the siege on the government complex. On February 16, a security source stated that IA, IP, and tribal forces "pushed away" the IS threat from the residential compound without providing further details. The situation in Baghdad remains sensitive; this is particularly so given statements by commander of the IA in Baghdad Colonel Qurain al-Obeidi demanding the situation is "calm" and denouncing attacks on the residents calling for "intervene" and "save the residents." (All translated from the Arabic)

3. On February 14, the Defense Ministry (MoD) stated that forces from the 19th Brigade of the 5th IA Division under the Khartoum Command (SOC) attacked IS in the Zabandy area, south of Tikrit, killing and injuring many IS members. The same day, clashes took place between IS and "security forces" in the Mikilahs, south of Tikrit, killing 14 IS members, injuring eight others, and resulting in the death of four members of the security forces. On February 15, an SVBIED detonated on the road between Dijla sub-district and Samara, injuring 10 members of the "Popular Mobilization." Further clashes took place in the Mikilahs and Zabandy areas between IS and the "Popular Mobilization," killing four members of the "Popular Mobilization" and injuring 13 others.

4. On February 14, MoD declared that "security forces"� killed an explosives workshop, a fuel warehouse, and rocket launch pads in the Gama area, northeast of Fallujah. The statement added that the shelling killed a rocket attack on Baghdad and that 55 terrorists were killed.

5. On February 12, Kuriib Hariboot, an Iranian-backed Iraqi Shia militia, stated that it "decided" to deploy a "rocket battery" to respond to indirect fires on Shia neighborhoods in northeastern Baghdad. The statement added that this came upon request from the residents. On February 14, six mortar rounds landed on Shula while two others landed on Qarashayn, also in northeastern Baghdad. The attack killed three individuals and injured 11 others in addition to causing material damage.

6. On February 15, IS executed 15 Peshmerga soldiers who had escaped previously. The bodies were reportedly found in Sinjar district, northeastern Kirkuk Province.

7. On February 15, ISIS launched an attack on the Khanaq area, west of the main area of Hadiya district, targeting intense clashes with the ISA and tribal fighters in the area.

8. On February 14, "security forces"� imposed a curfew on the main area of Tamanghit district, north of Baghdad, in preparation for a military operation in the area and its outskirts.

9. On February 15, ISIS launched an attack on "security forces"� around the Udaih Dam in northeastern Kirkuk Province. The attack included four suicide vehicles armed with Explosive Device (SVBIED) and guerrillas with light and medium weapons. Security forces blocked the nearby Kirkuk-Diyala highway to ensure delivery of military reinforcements. Commander of DIYALI Operations Command (DOC) General Abdul Amir al-Zaidi held a press conference at the dam and stated that forces from the 16th Brigade of the 5th IA Division repelled the attack. He further stated that ISIS attempted to use a sand barrier between Diyala and Sulaymaniyah to use construction equipment. Two members of the IA and two others from the "Popular Mobilization" were killed in the clashes and 20 individuals were wounded. (Mostly from "Popular Mobilization."

10. On February 14, "security forces"� fired an attempt to target the "Popular Mobilization" in the Khanaq sub-district, southeast of Samara, using an SVBIED. The force opened fire on the "Popular Mobilization" using SVBIED. The attack killed the earlier SVBIED and wounded six individuals who later died.

Syria Situation Report: January 20-26, 2015

January 21-23: ISIS forces in ar-Raqqa city and its countryside reportedly entered a state of high alert, erecting checkpoints to inspect identity documents, imposing a curfew in several areas, and instituting a ban on its members from traveling without official permission. In addition, ISIS executed a number of ISIS members in the southern outskirts of ar-Raqqa city on charges of attempting to return home.

January 20-23: The YPG rejected a 72-hour deadline to withdraw from captured positions north of Hasaka city. Kurdish residents of the city were reportedly evacuated to villages in the northern countryside as YPG reinforcements arrived to the city. On January 23, the Kurdish National Council (KNC) formed a committee to negotiate a truce agreement between the YPG and regime forces after tensions escalated further following a spate of YPG arrests of pro-regime elements in Ras al-Ayn northwest of Hasaka city.

January 21: A VBIED detonated in the majority-Alawite neighborhood of Azeema in Homs city, killing seven civilians and wounding thirty others.

January 24-26: YPG forces reportedly took complete control of Ayn al-Abad/Kobane after expelling ISIS from its remaining positions in the eastern neighborhoods of the town, although ISIS may still hold parts of the southeastern Mactalah neighborhood. YPG forces also seized two villages south of the town, marking the first Kurdish urban gains outside of Ayn al-Abad.

January 22: The Mujahideen Shura Council of Southern Damascus threatened to cancel ceasefire agreements in the southern Damascus neighborhoods of Yalda, Babbila, and Beit Sahem unless the regime reopens a major crossing to food aid. The crossing has been closed for 39 days.

January 22: Rebel battalions affiliated with HASI seized a JN headquarters in the town of Sihan, located in the Jabal al-Zawiya region of southern Idlib Province, arresting the local JN emir and confiscating an unspecified amount of weapons. HASI forces also seized several headquarters belonging to Katala' al-Farouq in the region. The escalation reportedly follows a disagreement over the division of spoils captured from the Syrian Revolutionaries Front and Harakat Hazm when the groups were expelled from Idlib Province in November 2014.

January 24: Jabhat al-Nusra (JN), Ahrar al-Sham (HASI), and the FSA-affiliated Southern Front seized the regime Brigade 82 base near Sheikh Miskin following the rebel announcement of three new named operations targeting remaining regime positions within Sheikh Miskin as well as regime positions along the supply route leading north out of the town.

January 24 - 25: An airstrike killed two prominent JN leaders, Abu Khadja Joulani and Abu Omar al-Hamwi, as they were traveling near the town of Kafir Halab in western Aleppo Province. Activists reported that the strike was conducted by the anti-ISIS coalition, but CENTCOM has not confirmed the strike.

January 21: JN and the Sham Front clashed in Aleppo city following the arrest of a Sham Front fighter at a JN checkpoint. JN deployed reinforcements to the area and arrested several members of the Sham Front, while the Sham Front deployed forces to guard its headquarters against possible JN attacks.

February 23: On January 22, the Lebanese Army dismantled a VBIED parked at a military checkpoint near Arsal and later ambushed a group of militants attempting to infiltrate another nearby checkpoint, killing four unidentified fighters. On January 23, alleged ISIS militants overran a Lebanese position outside Ras Baalbek, near Arsal. Lebanese Army forces later recaptured the area with helicopter and artillery support.

January 23: Rebel battalions affiliated with HASI seized a JN headquarters in the town of Shinnan, located in the Jabal al-Zawiya region of southern Idlib Province, arresting the local JN emir and confiscating an unspecified amount of weapons. HASI forces also seized several headquarters belonging to Katala’ al-Farouq in the region. The escalation reportedly follows a disagreement over the division of spoils captured from the Syrian Revolutionaries Front and Harakat Hazm when the groups were expelled from Idlib Province in November 2014.

Background Kinetic Activity

- Lebanese Armed Forces
- Opposition Forces
- Pro-Regime Forces
- ISIS
- YPG
- U.S.-Led Coalition
- Jabhat al-Nusra (JN)
- VBIED
- Major Clash
- Unknown Airstrike
- Anti-ISIS Coalition Airstrikes
- Major Regime Airstrikes

*January 20: A car bomb successfully targeted the commander of Chechen Salafi-jihadi group Jaysh al-Muhajireen wa al-Ansar in Harsitan, West of Aleppo city. A second car bomb targeted an unknown rebel commander in Hassa, North of Aleppo city.

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Content: Jennifer Caffarella
Graphics: John Sauerhoff

ISIS Forces Defeated in Ayn al-Abad/Kobane: YPG advances in Ayn al-Abad appear to have defeated ISIS forces in the town. While ISIS likely maintains positions in the surrounding countryside, the YPG advance into villages south of the town signifies that the YPG is likely to be successful in extending its line of control and penetrating deeper into ISIS terrain. The growing instability in ISIS’s control in Raqa may indicate that the loss of Ayn al-Abad will have asymmetric effects on the ISIS war effort in Syria.

Rebel – JN Tensions Flare in Northern Syria: Escalating tensions between JN and rebel forces in both Aleppo and southern Idlib provinces may indicate growing discontent with increasingly aggressive JN action in northern Syria. JN has historically been successful in mitigating intra-rebel tensions through local Shari’ah court mediation, and is likely to continue to pursue this strategy for preserving its gains in northern Syria. However, if no Shari’ah mediation emerges, it is possible that JN’s control will fragment as it begins to lose key local allies.

Regime Loses Key Military Base in Der’a: After contesting the base for months, JN and rebel forces control of the Brigade 82 military base near Sheikh Miskin in southern Der’a Province. This further defeat of regime forces in Sheikh Miskin is a critical setback for the regime’s ability to reestablish a crucial supply line to Der’a City from Damascus.

http://iswsyria.blogspot.com/2015/01/syria-update-january-6-12-2015.html
The Coalition against the Islamic State: February 2015

Coalition Air Strikes as of February 5, 2015

Airstrikes by the numbers

There have been 2,200 airstrikes since sorties began in Iraq in August and in Syria in September. The majority have been U.S. missions.

Source: U.S. Department of State

VESKO CHOLAKOV/THE WASHINGTON POST
Air Strikes in Syria and Iraq: As of 1.3.15

Confirmed air strikes up to 1 March 2015

Iraq 1,367  Syria 1,059

Note: Strikes have not been mapped when the precise location was not given or was unclear.
Source: Institute for the Study of War, US Central Command

### Combined Forces Air Component Commander Airpower Statistics As of 31 January 2015

#### Operation Inherent Resolve

**Close Air Support/Escort/Interdiction**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Sorties</th>
<th>Sorties with at least one weapon release</th>
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<td>2015</td>
<td>1,937</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>1,411</td>
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<td>2015</td>
<td>508</td>
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#### Number of Weapon Releases

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<th>Jul</th>
<th>Aug</th>
<th>Sep</th>
<th>Oct</th>
<th>Nov</th>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>760</td>
<td>1,641</td>
<td>1,407</td>
<td>1,867</td>
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#### Operation Inherent Resolve

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Intel, Surveillance and Recon Sorties</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
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<tr>
<td>Airlift and Airdrop Sorties</td>
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<tr>
<td>Airlift Cargo (Short Tons)*</td>
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<td>Airlift Passengers*</td>
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<td>Supplies Airdropped (Pounds)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tanker Sorties</td>
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<td>1,122</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fuel Offloaded (Millions of Pounds)</td>
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<td>81</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aircraft Refuelings</td>
<td>28,956</td>
<td>7,635</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Iraq only

- Some figures may have changed due to data re-calculation and re-verification

POC: AFCENT [CAOC] Public Affairs – DSN 318-436-1624
Syria: As of 27.1.1 5-2.2.15

1. January 27 – February 2: ISIS-affiliated news sources acknowledged the ISIS withdrawal from Ayn al-Arab/Kobane, stating that it had been prompted by high casualties and constant coalition airstrikes. Meanwhile, YPG forces continued advancing west, south, and east out of Ayn al-Arab, seizing at least thirty villages from ISIS amidst continuing coalition airstrikes.

2. January 28 – 29: The Hezbollah Qneita Martyrs Brigade targeted an Israeli convoy in the disputed Sheba’s Farm area of the Golan Heights with an anti-tank missile, killing two Israeli soldiers and prompting mutual shelling across the Lebanese-Israeli border killing a Spanish UN peacemaker. On January 29 Israel received a message via UNIFIL indicating that Hezbollah was not interested in further escalation.

3. January 31: Seven Islamist groups in Quneitra and Deraa Provinces formed Jaysh al-Jihad, stating that their relations with other rebel factions will be based on “Islamic law” and indicating their intent to establish a Sharia’s court.

4. January 29 – 31: Western-backed rebel group Harakat Hazm formally joined the Islamist-led Sham Front coalition following several days of clashes between JN and Harakat Hazm in western Aleppo. Provinces JN seized several Harakat Hazm positions, including the Sheikh Soleiman military base, during the clashes. Meanwhile, JN and the Sham Front reportedly established the “Military Operations Room of the Southern Aleppo Countryside” on the same day.

5. January 30: YPG and regime forces in Hasaka city reached a ceasefire agreement following the intervention of a senior security delegation from Damascus. The agreement included a prisoner exchange, the formation of a “National Peace Council,” and the arrest of the local regime NDF commander.

6. January 27 – 28: JN in the Eastern Qalamoun reportedly declared its withdrawal from all Dara’a’s bodies and agreements made with other rebel factions, although it stated that it will continue to coordinate against the regime and ISIS. Meanwhile, JN and ISIS militants reportedly clashed in the Qalamoun region along the Lebanese border after JN fighters stationed at a checkpoint opened fire on a vehicle carrying the local regime unit.


9. January 31: JN fighters opened fire on several Ahrar al-Sham members attempting to prevent the erection of a JN checkpoint in the Idlib countryside, killing an Ahrar al-Sham Shura’s official and wounding several others. After negotiations, JN and Ahrar al-Sham agreed to dismantle checkpoints in the area and form a joint judicial commission to investigate the incident.

10. February 1: JN claimed an SVEST attack targeting a bus of Lebanese Shi'a pilgrims in the Old City of Damascus, killing at least nine and wounding several others.

11. February 1: JN claimed an SVEST attack targeting a bus of Lebanese Shi'a pilgrims in the Old City of Damascus, killing at least nine and wounding several others.

Additional noteworthy events include:

- 28 JAN: A VBIED detonated in the town of Meizrit, west of Dara’a city, killing at least ten civilians.
- 01 FEB: YPG forces seized a VBIED attack in the town of al-Maaddah in northeastern Hasaka Province amid clashes with ISIS fighters in the area.

ISIS-Affiliated Rebels Raided in Damascus: The raids conducted by Faylaq al-Rahman and Jaysh al-Islam against rebel brigades alleged to have pledged allegiance to ISIS in Eastern Ghouta confirms continued ISIS effort to widen its influence in the capital despite continuous attacks from other rebel factions. As the YPG counter-offensive continues to roll back ISIS from Ayn al-Arab/Kobane, ISIS may seek to invigorate its footholds in Damascus and other parts of western Syria to offset losses in northwestern Syria.

JN Clashes with Rebels in Aleppo Province: The incorporation of Harakat Hazm into the Islamist-led Sham Front indicates growing integration of moderate elements into Islamist-dominated structures in northern Syria as international assistance to the moderate opposition fails to manifest. It also represents a successful maneuver to counter JN influence, effectively neutralizing ongoing Harakat Hazm-JN clashes by enveloping Harakat Hazm under the protection of the Sham Front. This move by the Sham Front is therefore an important indicator of the group’s ability to withstand JN pressure. Nonetheless, the establishment of a joint southern Aleppo operations room between the Sham Front and JN likely constitutes a concession to JN that solidifies the cessation of hostilities in Aleppo in a way that preserves JN influence.

Regime Continues to Pursue a “Unified Syria”: The Assad regime’s war effort continues to pursue a “unified Syria.” The regime’s intervention to negotiate a resolution of the escalating conflict between the YPG and local NDF forces indicates regime commitment to maintaining its isolated outposts in Eastern Syria. Preservation of these outposts is utilized by the Assad regime to lay credence to the claim that the Syrian government can and will regain control of the entirety of the country. This position was echoed in the January 26-29 Moscow Talks between the regime and the regime-tolerated opposition, during which regime representatives called for the maintenance of Syrian “unity and sovereignty” in the face of “foreign interference” and “terrorism.”

Syria:
As of
10.2.1
5-
17.2.1
5 1

1 February 10: Twenty-eight FSA-affiliated rebel factions announced the battle of Tapsal, which began on February 10, targeting the town of Nasiriyah, Syria. The announcement occurred on the same day as a visit by regime head of political security, Bassem Ghazali, to his hometown of Qamishli.

2 February 10 – 16: Approximately 5,000 Syrian soldiers, Hezbollah fighters, and Iranian militia forces seized several towns and hills in northern Deyr ez-Zor Province, including Deir al-Adas and Deir al-Malas, following the launch of a regime offensive on February 9. Hereditary General Qassem Soleimani and Syrian Defense Minister General Fahd Jassem al-Freij separately visited regime forces along the frontlines over the following days. A snowstorm on February 12 prevented air strikes and slowed the regime advance, enabling rebels to consolidate their lines and repel several regime attacks. Clashes are still ongoing.

3 February 10 – 16: ISIS allowed hundreds of civilians to evacuate Sarrin and several nearby towns south of Ayn al-Arab and the group prepared defensive lines along the eastern bank of the Euphrates River and the Aleppo-Hassakeh highway. On February 15, YPG forces seized Baghuz Hill, southeast of Ayn al-Arab within the boundary of al-Raqqa Province, following clashes with ISIS militants.

4 February 12: Rebel group Failaq al-Rahman lashed out at ISIS for its role in the Eastern Ghouta, targeting four members of the group's leadership in the town of Saqaa. The ISIS emir attempted to detonate an SVEST before being shot by a rebel fighter.

5 February 13: Turkey declared the border area near Tel Abyad east of Ayn al-Arab to be a "closed military zone" following clashes between YPG and ISIS forces in the area. Meanwhile, a car bomb detonated near a Turkish police checkpoint in the Turkish town of Suruc, north of the border city of Ayn al-Arab, wounding three. No group claimed responsibility for the attack.

6 February 11 – 13: Regime and NDF cut off supplies of fuel, electricity, and water to the rebel-held village of al-Hamra north of Damascus, placing the town under siege. Regime forces later attempted to advance into the village but were repelled by rebel forces. Meanwhile, a VBIED detonated in the area of Western Hama located east of Hama, killing six. NDF later published a statement condemning such attacks.

7 February 17: Regime forces supported by NDF, Hezbollah, and Syrian-Iranian militia fighters reportedly seized the villages of al-Bakr, al-Rasm, and Hodian above of Aleppo city following clashes with YPG. The Shom Fray fight for regime forces to advance into the territories of al-Na'a, the Shom Fray, and other rebel groups, bringing regime forces within 80 kilometers of the heart of the town of al-Na'a and Hodian. Regime forces also advanced in several neighborhoods of Eastern Aleppo city and other areas north of Aleppo, although the reports remain unconfirmed.

8 February 13 – 16: On February 13, local residents in Maarrat Misraba in the Jabal al-Zawiyah region held demonstrations demanding that JN leave the area. On February 15, JN fighters stormed the Maarrat Misraba police station in retaliation for the attacks and killed the police chief in a clash, prompting local citizens and FSA fighters to erect checkpoints and detaining JN members in the town. JN fighters also stormed Ayn Labas in the Jabal al-Zawiyah region on February 16, seizing the headquarters of the FSA-affiliated "8th Brigade" while detaining dozens of civilians and fighters.

9 February 14 – 15: Regime transport jets reportedly conducted multiple flights in an attempt to carry pro-regime "shabiha" and popular committees' militants by air from the Hamah Military Airport to Damascus International Airport in order to reinforce the regime's forces in Damascus and Hama Provinces.

10 February 16: Rebel factions surrounded the headquarters of Liwa al-Din in the town of Balbina in the western Daraa, claiming that the group had been antibodies to the regime in exchange for aid deliveries that the group was able to obtain in the town of Balbina in Hama. On February 6, Liwa al-Ahd issued a statement denouncing any involvement in negotiations with the regime.

11 February 12: The YPG are reportedly strengthening the defenses on the Turkish border in order to "serve as a battlefield" toward the Turkish army of Iran.

12 February 13: JN held a demonstration in the town of Maarrat Misraba in northern Idlib Province "in tribute" to the civilians of Daraa and other areas in Eastern Ghouta targeted by heavy regime aerial bombardment. JN also opened a new office for the study of war in Maarrat Misraba on the same day.

ISIS continues its offensive in Anbar near the al-Asad Airbase. ISIS has control of some parts of the nearby sub-district of Baghdaadi, as its ability to demolish the homes of the Iraqi Security Forces there indicates. ISIS is also deliberately destroying government buildings and infrastructure, creating a practical as well as symbolic problem for the reconstruction of governance in the area. The government is likely prioritizing the operations in the area because of its proximity to the Asad Airbase and the threat upon the civilians at the residential compound. Before ISIS launched attacks on Baghdaadi, Katal'a Hezbollolah, a local Iranian-backed Iraqi Shia militia, deployed to Sijara, east of Ramadi, to support Ramadi with forces and resources to fight ISIS. That some Anbaris permitted such a militia in their area likely signals that the residents lack manpower or help in the battle against ISIS. ISIS might be attempting to capitalize on this lack of resources in Anbar to force the ISF to redeploy forces from outside and outside the province in ways that make other areas in Anbar vulnerable. It is important to observe whether ISIS initiates another operation in Anbar against areas like Ramadi or Hadditha. ISIS has recently conducted forces to move military resources from a given area in order to capture more terrain or to keep anti-ISIS forces in check. ISIS almost certainly conducted the attack on Malhoun, southwest of Arbil, in order to force the Peshmerga to prioritize the defense of Arbil and divert them from conducting offensive operations against ISIS around Mosul.
1. On February 19, an anonymous source in Nineveh Province stated that “unidentified gunmen” raided a house belonging to an ISIS leader in Sumer neighborhood, located in southeastern Mosul, killing three ISIS fighters, including the ISIS leader. Another local source stated that an IED placed by “unidentified gunmen” on Airport Street in western Mosul targeted an ISIS convoy headed for Mosul airport, killing nine and injuring five others. Following the attacks, another local source stated that ISIS conducted search and raid operations in Sumer neighborhood and kidnapped “dozens” of civilians. ISIS reportedly set up checkpoints in the neighborhood and in surrounding areas.

2. On February 19, an anonymous security source stated that a “special tasks group” for the Federal Police including mechanized and “commando” companies and a detachment from the “Anti-Explosives Unit” were deployed to al-Baghdadi sub-district, west of Hit district, on the orders of Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi. A separate report from an ISF captain in al-Baghdadi sub-district stated that weapons and ammunition had “failed to arrive” from the central government. He stated that ISIS fighters are waiting for security forces in his compound to run out of ammunition before launching a large attack.

3. On February 19, a tribal leader of the Obeidi tribe in Baghdad, Qatari al-Sumarrad stated that community leaders of Baghdad and residents called for Gran Ayad al-Sirari to send “Popular Mobilization” forces to Baghdad to break the ISIS siege around the residential compound. IP commander of Baghdad called for the Prime Minister, the “southern tribes” and the US to break the siege around the residential compound.

4. On February 20, the spokesman of tribal forces in Haditha, Ibrahim al-Jibbati stated that tribal fighters opened a corridor between Baghdad and the Asad Airbase after ISIS blocked the main road. He added that humanitarian aid sent from the Shia religious establishment and other organizations arrived at the base but did not make its way to the besieged residents. He blamed the commander of the 7th IA Division for “not taking his role” in delivering aid. Also, IP commander of Baghdad stated that three children died and “dozens” of residents were poisoned due to consuming contaminated water.

5. On February 19, an anonymous source in Anbar Operations Command (AOC) stated that the Iraqi Air Force launched airstrikes targeting an ISIS headquarters in Jolan neighborhood in northern Fallujah. The strikes killed 17 “ISIS members” and destroyed four vehicles, in addition to weapons, rockets, and rocket launch platforms.

6. On February 19, an anonymous security source in Salah al-Din stated that there were “large military preparations” by the ISF on the outskirts of Tikrit, adding that the “Popular Mobilization” arrived to participate in the operation as well. The source stated that security forces had engaged in “heavy shelling” of Tikrit and al-Dour district, south of Tikrit, using mortars and artillery and causing an unknown number of casualties. On February 20, member of Salah al-Din Provincial Council (SPC), Khazal Hamad called for the residents of the city to depart in anticipation of a military operation. Also, chairman of the security commission at SPC, Jassem al-Jabara called for residents of Alas, Dous, Albu Ajil, and areas further north towards the Farra Bridge, northeast of Baiji to evacuate their areas to avoid civilian casualties.

7. On February 18, the chairman of security for northern Babil area in Babil Provincial Council, Thamir Thanas stated that two “American Apache helicopters” landed in northern Babil. Later, a source from the “Popular Mobilization” stated that his forces initiated a search operation inspect the “landing” and that it might have been to provide ISIS with supplies. On February 20, Kata’ib Hezbollah (KH), an Iranian backed Iraqi Shia militia, stated that it will deploy “advanced” air defense weapons capable of “downing all types of helicopters” to target “helicopters” used to supply ISIS.

Source; ISW, http://iswiraq.blogspot.com/2015/03/iraq-situation.html

The ISF and Shia’s religious establishment responded to calls from security forces and tribal leaders in Baghdad to reinforce them and break the ISIS siege of the town, which falls just outside of al-Asad airbase west of Hit. Baghdad residents are experiencing a humanitarian crisis, which explains why they are reaching across sectarian lines for help. The reported ISF reinforcements and humanitarian aid have likely deployed forward near Baghdad, but it appears that they have not yet broken the ISIS siege to deliver them to the city. Meanwhile, the ISF and Shia militias may be preparing for another attack against Tikrit and ousting areas northeast and southeast of the ISIS-controlled city. ISIS maintains its positions in Tikrit and also continues to manage internal resistance in Mosul. The report from northern Babil in situating US collaboration with ISIS is part of a growing trend in anti-US rhetoric from Iranian-backed lethal Shia’s militias, which is reflected now in the rhetoric of Popular Mobilization elements also. This anti-US sentiment constitutes a risk to US interests and personnel in country.
Iraq: As of 20-23.
2:15 II

On February 21, 22, Director of Qazanliyah sub-dist. Mazen Al-Din stated that an attacker detonated an SVBIED near the Eastern building for the 3rd Regime's border guards, injuring four people and destroying several cars. Qazanliyah is located southeast of Muqdadiyah district and five miles from the Iran-Iraq border. The Qazanliyah local government announced increased security measures and requested security reinforcements.

On February 21, tribal leader of the Albu Ni'uz tribe Sheikh Naim Gaoud Nimrawi stated that ISIS executed 30 individuals who were kidnapped from houses surrounding the residential complex in al-Baghdadi sub-district, west of Hit district. The tribal leader added that the bodies were burned in a trench located between al-Baghdadi and Hit.

On February 22, an anonymous source in the Ministry of Interior (MoI) stated that an SVBIED detonated in the industrial area of al-Bajra neighborhood, southwestern Baghdad, killing three and injuring 10 others.

On February 23, an anonymous source in the MoI stated that an unidentified gunman attacked a police and Salah (Awakening) checkpoint near Arab Jabbar area in al-Dora neighborhood, southwestern Baghdad, killing two Salafi fighters and one police officer and injuring four others.

On February 21, an anonymous security source in the MoI stated that two IEDs targeted a "Popular Mobilization" convoy in al-Nassir and Salah village, west of Abu Ghraib, west of Baghdad, killing one "Popular Mobilization" fighter and injuring nine others.

On February 21, 22, an anonymous security source stated that "Popular Mobilization" fighters foiled an attack using an SVBIED targeting the Saw Aswan area, north of Samarra district. The fighters reportedly detonated the SVBIED using small arms fire before it was able to reach its target. The explosion did not result in any casualties.

On February 22, an anonymous security source in Salah ad-Din province stated that ISIS kidnapped 23 individuals accused of cooperating with "security forces" from al-Sedra village, southeast of Shamiq sub-district, in northern Salah ad-Din.

On February 20, local police and tribal fighters reportedly broke the siege of the al-Baghdadi residential complex, delivering aid and clearing a path from the complex to the Aja al-Asad Airbase, southwest of al-Baghdadi. Spokesperson for Iraqi Sunnis tribal fighters Ibraheem al-Jabouri stated that an armed Iraqi Army (IA) brigade, an armored police battalion, and two other battalions arrived at al-Asad base in support of the operation. The Ministry of the Interior stated that the remaining ISIS contingent had fled towards the Euphrates and suffered heavy losses. On February 22, Head of Anbar Operations Command (AOC) Mj. Gen. Qasim al-Muhannadi stated that IA, police, and Emergency Battalions attacked ISIS' "den" surrounding al-Baghdadi, killing 21 ISIS members and destroying four vehicles. IA Aviation helicopters destroyed three ISIS "sites," one rocket launcher, and four VBIEDs. On February 23, al-Baghdadi local council member Abd al-Jabbar al-Obaidi stated that IA, local and federal police, tribal fighters, and the Golden Division recaptured the al-Baghdadi police station and killed 20 ISIS members. The Ministry of Defense now reports that "most" of al-Baghdadi sub-district has been cleared.

On February 21, security forces began assembling for an operation to retake Tikrit in an operation to be launched from multiple axes. An anonymous security source stated that security forces were gathering to retake Tikrit city and surrounding areas. The spokesperson for the "Popular Mobilization" National Alliance Co-Chairman Ahmed al-Asadi stated that "all formations" that participated in retaking Jurf al-Sakhir, Jala, and Djidjala, would participate in retaking Tikrit as well.

On February 22, People's, YPG, Asayish, Kurdish security forces, and Sinjar Yabdi fighters cleared nine Arab villages on the Syrian border, forcing ISIS members to flee to Syria. According to the director of Sinjar sub-district, north of Sinjar district, the Kurdish forces suffered no casualties.

Security forces have reportedly cleared "most" of al-Baghdadi sub-district and are preparing operations in Salah ad-Din to recapture Tikrit. In al-Baghdadi, the siege of the residential complex in the center of the sub-district was broken and police stations were recaptured although there remain attempts by ISIS to target security forces in the area. Tikrit will pose a greater challenge, requiring the coordination of security forces, tribal fighters, and Iraqi Shi'a militias in an operation that also aims to clear a number of smaller towns surrounding Tikrit. The clearing of Tikrit may be an indicator of security force performance for a possible upcoming operation to retake Mosul. Tikrit is likely to be a source of heavy resistance, along with booby-traps that will make any capture of the area painstakingly slow work. Finally, the concentration of security forces in al-Baghdadi and Tikrit may also expose other parts of Iraq to attacks by ISIS.
Iraq: As of 24-25. 2.15 II

1. On February 24, a VBIED and an IED detonated in the Jisr Diyala area of southern Baghdad, killing 22 individuals and injuring 51 others.

2. On February 24, a VBIED detonated in the Askari neighborhood of Tuz Khurmata, northern Salah ad-Din, killing three individuals and injuring six others.

3. On February 23, "intense" clashes broke out between members of the "Popular Mobilization" and ISIS in Mishala area, south of Tikrit, killing one member of the "Popular Mobilization" and injuring six others, injuring six others.

4. On February 24, a "local" source from Nineva stated that coalition airstrikes targeted ISIS in the Kindai Camp and in the Ghabat area, northern Mosul.

5. On February 24, a "local" source from Nineva stated that coalition airstrikes targeted ISIS vehicles that were heading from Syria toward Mosul. The targeting took place on the Iraqi-Syrian border and resulted in the death of 29 ISIS members.

6. On February 25, an anonymous source from Anbar Operations Command (AOC) stated that "400" ISIS members crossed the Iraqi-Syrian border near Qaim.

7. On February 24, a VBIED detonated in Mishahda, north of Baghdad, killing two individuals and injuring four others.

8. On February 5, an anonymous security source from Salah ad-Din stated that ISIS kidnapped 42 individuals from the Obaid tribe from the Rabidha village, north of Alam, in Salah ad-Din province.

9. On February 25, commander of Anbar Operations Command (AOC) General Qassem al-Muhammad stated that force from the IA and IP "supported" by tribal fighters "stormed" ISIS "gatherings" in Baghdad sub-district and the outskirts of Hit district. The forces clashed with ISIS and reportedly killed 23 ISIS members and injured 17 others in addition to destroying 17 ISIS vehicles, four VBIEFs, and three rocket launch pads. Also, ISIS launched mortar rounds targeting the residential compound in Baghdadi, injuring one individual and causing material damage.

ISIS has likely reconstituted in areas in the southern Baghdad belt in a way that enables it to launch VBIED attacks against Baghdad. The ISF and various Iraqi Shia militias dislodged ISIS from its stronghold in Jurif al-Sakhar, northern Babil, in October of 2014. Jurif al-Sakhar most likely housed ISIS VBIED cells that manufactured VBIEDs and deployed them to target civilians and ISF in Babil province and in areas of southern Baghdad and south of Baghdad. These attacks decreased dramatically following the defeat of ISIS in Jurif al-Sakhar. The last three days, however, have witnessed two VBIED attacks in Baya and Jurif Diyala, areas of southern Baghdad. The VBIEDs were most likely deployed from areas south of Baghdad, as Jurif al-Sakhar remains under ISF and militia control. ISIS remains capable of launching terror attacks against civilians as well as asymmetric and conventional attacks against Iraqi security forces. The organization will likely work to increase its operational tempo, both in terms of conventional attacks and terror attacks against Baghdad and Samarra, as the Mosul offensive approaches in order to divert ISF, militia, and Peshmerga resources.
Iran Raises its Posture in Southern Syria: IRGC Quds Force commander General Qassem Suleimani’s appearance along regime frontlines validates reports of Iranian command-and-control over the ongoing offensive in Dera’a Province. Rebel forces fighting in the area also claim that Iranian proxies – including Hezbollah and Iranian-Afghani Shia volunteers – comprise a large proportion of the ground forces participating in the offensive. These indicators mark an unprecedented degree of visibility regarding Iranian ground involvement on behalf of the Syrian regime and suggest that Iran has designated Western Ghouta and Quneitra Provinces as key terrain in a departure from the previous focus upon Aleppo and Hama. In turn, the heavy Iranian and Hezbollah presence in this offensive may indicate that the regime lacks the capacity to mount offensive operations in southern Syria. Alternatively, the regime may intend to leverage the Iranian focus on Dera’a Province to direct its attention towards other battlefronts.

ISIS Reconfigures Forces in Northern Syria: ISIS evacuation of noncombatants from several villages south of Ayn al-Arab appears to indicate that ISIS intends to re-entrench its forces in northern Syria along a defensive line on the outskirts of the Ayn al-Arab/Kobani canton which roughly correspond to positions held by ISIS prior to the launch of its main offensive against Ayn al-Arab in September 2014. A successful ISIS consolidation along this line may enable ISIS to halt YPG momentum, secure remaining key terrain in eastern Aleppo Province, and potentially reallocate remaining resources to other fronts, particularly eastern Homs and Hama Provinces. Although the joint YPG-FSA forces participating in the Euphrates Volcano Operations Room have messaged their intentions to continue offensive operations against ISIS outside the boundaries of the canton, anti-ISIS forces may risk overextension with continued advances.

Rebels Declare Opposition to Aleppo Freeze Zone: On February 15 and 16, the Islamist-leaning Sham Front rebel coalition and the rebel-led Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) published statements condemning the United Nations proposal for a ‘freeze’ to fighting in Aleppo as favorable to the regime, effectively rendering the planned ceasefire inert. Notably, the Sham Front’s declaration follows the recent consolidation of an Aleppo city operations room which included JN and Ansar al-Din, hardline Salafi-jihadist organizations which have previously denounced the ‘freeze zone’ proposal. Meanwhile, battlefield advances by pro-regime forces north of Aleppo city on February 17 threaten link regime units north of the city with forces besieged in the towns of Nubl and Zahraa, leaving JN positions in Huraytan and Kafr Hamra as the only obstacle to a complete encirclement of Aleppo. Although the full extent of the regime advance remains unknown amidst a rebel counterattack, these gains suggest that the Syrian President Bashar al-Assad is equally uninterested in a ‘freeze’ in Aleppo despite positive rhetoric indicating his support for the plan.
Iraq: As 12.2.15 II

1 On February 12, an anonymous security source in Anbar stated that a force from the First Rapid Intervention Division carried out operations against ISIS in the al-Harirat area, east of Fallujah. Also, "security forces" attacked ISIS in the Hit area, south of Fallujah, killing five ISIS members, wounding five others, and destroying a vehicle equipped with a heavy machine gun and an ISIS-controlled building.

2 On February 13, ISIS "stormed" a number of houses in Rabibah, north of Alam sub-district, and east of Tikrit, abducting at gunpoint 29 men from the al-Ohaid tribe, taking them to an unknown location. Another source stated that some of the men were members of the Iraqi Army (IA).

3 On February 12, ISIS attacked and took control of Dijla and Mikilish, south of Tikrit. Fourteen "police" members and dozens of ISIS members were killed, while between 12 and 15 police members were wounded. ISF also destroyed five vehicles. Police members began moving fleeing residents from Dijla toward the al-Ashiq archaeological area, north of Samarra. An anonymous senior security officer stated that security forces were massing with heavy artillery north of Dijla supported by "Popular Mobilization" forces. On February 13, ISIS demolished "dozens" of houses that belonged to ISF members in Mikilish using IEDs, Federal Police (FP), "Popular Mobilization," and "large" military forces from Samarra Operations Command (SOC) arrived in the area and engaged in clashes with ISIS. The forces reportedly took control of Dijla and Mikilish, killing 16 ISIS members. These reports are initial and unconfirmed.

4 On February 12, ISF attackers used an SVBIED to target the Hit police station, and two SVBIEDs to target security forces and "Popular Mobilization".

5 On February 12, ISF members launched an attack on al-Khafra area, west of Haditha district, using "dozens of mortars" while attempting to penetrate the area. The attack resulted in no casualties for either side, and al-Jughat tribal fighters reinforced their presence in the area.

6 On February 12, KDP Media Official Saed Mansourite stated that ISIS launched an attack accompanied by an unspecified number of "suicide attacks" on Peshmerga positions under the cover of a dust storm in Bashiq, the Hassan Shem area of Khanik, east of Mosul, and the village of Zummar, near the southwest of Mosul. Peshmerga supported by international coalition airstrikes repelled the attacks, resulting in "heavy" ISIS casualties and equipment losses. Eighteen ISF members were killed, while the Peshmerga reported no losses. DoD stated that four international coalition airstrike targeted one "ISI" large tactical unit, a "tactical unit," and a staging area, destroying two bulldozers, two vehicles, one armored vehicle, one building, and one "heavy machine gun" near Mosul.

ISIS has launched major attacks in Anbar, Salah ad Din, and Ninewa over the last two days. ISIS may be launching attacks when weather will obscure their movements from overhead visibility and airstrikes. ISIS remains capable of launching large and complex military operations despite the US-led air campaign. In Anbar, ISIS is attacking into areas around Baghdad and also attacked al-Asad airbase directly, where U.S. military advisors are training Iraqi Army members and tribal fighters. The main attack on Baghdad highlights ISIS resiliency in Anbar and the limitations of the air campaign, though the security of al-Asad airbase remains intact. Meanwhile, the attacks south of Tikrit generated a significant military response by the ISF and Shia militias because of its potential to disrupt the ground supply line from Camp Taji, Balad, and Samarra further north toward Iway and southwestern Kirkuk where there are forward-deployed ISF and militia units. The attacks also generated an elevated response because of their proximity to Samarra, where the ISF and Shia’s militias are concentrating defenses to protect the shrines of the Imams Ali al-Hadi and Hassan al-Askari.
Syria:
As of
17.2.1
5-
23.2.1
51
Syria: As of 17.2.15-23.2.15 II

ISIS Forces Defeated on Multiple Fronts: Continued victories by YPG forces supported by local militias, rebel groups, and U.S.-led coalition air strikes have considerably challenged ISIS in northern Syria. On the heels of ISIS defeat in Ayn al-Arab/Kobani, the YPG-led offensive in Hasaka is forcing ISIS to undertake two main defensive efforts that threatens to overtax ISIS ability to balance multiple fronts. As a result, ISIS appears to have accepted tactical losses in favor of reinforcing key terrain deeper in the ISIS “interior” in order to set a limit of advance for YPG-led forces. As it does so, continued ISIS escalation in Homs and Damascus provinces indicates that defeats in northern Syria are unlikely fully to disrupt the ISIS campaign in Syria. These defeats may actually encourage ISIS to pursue expansion west- and southward into areas where the YPG is unable to project force and coalition airstrikes are unlikely to target in the near term.

JN Achieves Success in Campaign to Neutralize Moderates in Aleppo: The full dissolution of Western-backed group Harakat Hazm cements JN gains in western Aleppo Province and neutralizes a threat to JN security in northern Syria. The lack of rebel outcry against JN in response to its escalation against Hazm is a dangerous indicator of JN ability to act against moderate actors without jeopardizing its own embedded position within rebel ranks. While Aleppo-based rebels attempted to play a mediating role as the JN escalation unfolded, they were unable to coerce JN into halting its aggression and proved unwilling to escalate against JN when intervention failed. This sustained deference to JN is a product of JN’s significant contribution to the rebel defense of Aleppo city against the regime’s attempted encirclement. This example illustrates that JN is likely to maintain its escalation potential against moderate forces in Syria as long as it continues to provide desperately needed military capabilities to the Syrian opposition on crucial front lines.

Aleppo Ceasefire Proposal Fails to Gain Traction Despite Tailoring: The reported selection of neighborhoods in southwestern Aleppo city that have a relative lack of JN presence for a trial ceasefire indicates UN effort to tailor its proposal to achieve realistic tactical success that could be built upon over time. However, the outright rejection of the proposal by the Aleppo Revolutionary Council follows similar rejections by the umbrella Revolutionary Command Council and the Aleppo Jabhat Shamiya military coalition that operates alongside Aleppo Revolutionary Council-backed groups. The Aleppo Revolutionary Council rejection therefore indicates a growing rejection of the ceasefire initiative despite its careful tailoring. JN’s consolidation of additional territorial control and influence within rebel ranks in Aleppo province following the dissolution of Harakat Hazm further decreases the likelihood that the proposal will gain traction.

Iraq: As of 28.2.15 To 1.3.15

1 On February 28, unidentified gunmen launched a mortar round that landed in Dora, southern Baghdad. On March 1, a security force found four unidentified dead bodies with gunshot wounds in the Mirdif area of eastern Baghdad.

2 The operation to clear the city of Tikrit has been announced. On February 27, spokesman of the Popular Mobilization Commission Karim Nuri stated that the operation to clear Tikrit, Dour, and Alam from ISIS control will be launched at the order of Prime Minister Abadi. Governor of Salah ad-Din Raid al-Jubouri stated that residents from the province who graduated training camps will participate in the operation, and that 2,000 tents were prepared to host fleeing families in Samarra. The delay in launching the operation was reportedly in order to allow more families to flee. On February 28, IA artillery targeted "ISIS hideouts" in Dour. On March 1, an anonymous security source stated that ISIS held an unspecified number of civilians in Tikrit, Alam, and Albu Ajal as "human shields." On the same day, a resident from Tikrit stated in a phone call that "most Tikrit residents fled the city and that those who remained are "poor," without the resources to leave. Residents of Alam reportedly remain in the area. Another report indicated that Tikrit residents are fleeing toward Alas to the east, then on to Kirkuk, while others flee to Bajji, Shirqat, and then Mosul. Also on March 1, the Office of the Prime Minister stated that the PM arrived in Samarra to "视察" the Tikrit operation. Another statement from the office stated that the PM had announced the launch of the "security campaign to liberate Salah ad-Din," emphasizing the need to protect the civilians and their belongings. "Popular Mobilization" spokesman Ahmed al-Asadi held a press conference announcing the launch of the operation as well. IA artillery at Camp Speicher targeted "ISIS hideouts" in Tikrit, killing 23 "ISIS members" and destroying three vehicles. The ground assault was launched toward Dour, south of Tikrit, from Tura Khurmatu toward Alam, east of Tikrit; from Camp Speicher toward Qadisiyah, north of Tikrit; from "south of Tikrit" toward Oja in the south; and from the Diyala area, northwest of Tikrit, to the Yarmouk residential compound, west of Tikrit. The source highlighted that the attack on central Tikrit was launched from "multiple directions" without further specifying.

3 On February 28, two VBIEDs detonated in a local market in Babil, southeast of Baquba, killing 15 individuals and injuring 53 others.

4 On February 28, an SVBIED detonated near the Hosh area, west of Samarra, killing three members of the "Popular Mobilization" and injuring 15 others.

5 On February 28, ISIS launched an attack on a headquarters of the Federal Police (FP) in the Souk Shuaa area, north of Samarra, using three SVBIEDs and gunmen attempting to storm the headquarters. The attackers reportedly killed one FP member and injured eight others but failed to storm the headquarters. The source did not indicate whether the SVBIEDs detonated successfully or not. A report later indicated that "security forces" launched an attack on ISIS in the area killing 22 ISIS members.

6 On February 28, ISIS launched an attack on a border crossing on the Iraqi-Saudi border called "Muhar Majan." Mol did not specify the exact location but stated that a force from the 1st Battalion, 1st Border Guard Brigade, of the Fifth Area Border Guard Command, repelled the attack killing and injuring an unspecified number of ISIS fighters in addition to seizing ISIS vehicles.

7 On February 28, an anonymous security source stated that IA and "Popular Mobilization" forces opened fire on a boat that carried ISIS members that was moving "very slowly" conducting reconnaissance in the part of the Euphrates River between Jaf al-Salkhor and Amiriyat al-Falaj. He added that the attack sank the boat.

The ground operation to retake Tikrit and its surrounding areas has begun. While shelling and operations on the periphery of the city have been launched previously, this appears to be the offensive that aims to retake the city from ISIS. The town has high symbolic value for the participants in the offensive. Tikrit is the hometown of deposed president Saddam Hussein and has historically been a source of anti-government insurgency. Following the fall of Mosul, the city became notorious for the massacre of hundreds of ISF members kidnapped from the nearby Camp Speicher. An ISIS video released later showed the executions of dozens of ISF members, presumably those kidnapped from the base. This massacre generated a major backlash and public outcry, especially from the parents and relatives of the soldiers, who on one occasion stormed the Council of Representatives building in central Baghdad demonstrating their frustration at the lack of answers regarding the whereabouts of their kids. This operation therefore likely has major support from Iraq's Shia communities, which bore the brunt of these losses. The Shia's militia participating in the operation to retake Tikrit are therefore highly motivated to deal a counter-blows in this symbolic area. Iraqi Sunnis, likely of the Jabur tribe, are also taking part in the operation and are similarly motivated to confront ISIS. The Jabur tribe has been dislodged from their areas by ISIS. One of these areas, Alam, east of Tikrit, showed some of the earliest signs of Iraqi Sunni anti-ISIS resistance following the fall of Mosul. The sensitive nature of this operation has led PM Abadi to oversee it personally and give the order to launch it. ISIS has entrenched itself in Tikrit and will most likely mount strong resistance. In addition, ISIS has likely booby-trapped the city with IEDs, further complicating the movement of the anti-ISIS forces.
Syria: As of 24.2.1 - 5-2.3.15

1. February 23: JN claimed credit for the suicide attack that targeted a pro-regime checkpoint near the entrance to the Surya neighborhood of northeastern Damascus city on February 23. JN claimed the attack was a double SVBIED attack, and stated that the attack was "in remembrance for our beloved Shams and especially the burnt city of Douma."

2. February 24: YPG forces supported by local militias and U.S.-led coalition airstrikes advanced in a two-pronged offensive against ISIS in Hasaka Province. Reinforced YPG forces seized the ISIS strongholds of Tel Hamir and Tel Baraka northeast of Hasaka City in addition to ISIS territories near Tel Tamir northwest of Hasaka City.

3. February 28: Following the initiation of a YPG-led offensive against ISIS in Hasaka Province, ISIS kidnapped hundreds of Assyrian Christian civilians from towns southeast of Hasaka City. ISIS subsequently released 19 of the captured civilians according to a verdict passed by ISIS Shura's court after negotiations with tribal mediators.

4. February 24: A French parliamentary delegation held independent talks with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and Syrian government officials in Damascus. The talks did not receive the consent of the French Foreign Ministry, which, alongside French President Francois Hollande, immediately denounced the action.

5. March 1: YPG and rebel forces seized three villages on the eastern bank of the Euphrates river across from the ISIS-held border town of Jarabulus. In response to continued YPG gains in this area, ISIS reportedly reinforced the southern and eastern fronts of its territory in the Ar-Raqqah countryside with troops from Raqqah in order to impede YPG progress toward Raqqa city.


7. February 28: Three SVBIEDs detonated targeting two mosques in rebel-held towns in the eastern Qamishli region north of Damascus. Pro-rebel sources accused the regime of conducting the attacks, and thirteen local rebel brigades announced a joint operation against regime forces in the area in response to the alleged attack.

8. February 28: March 1: UN Special Envoy to Syria Staffan de Mistura traveled to Damascus to meet with regime officials and discuss the details of a proposed six-week ceasefire in Aleppo city. Syrian Deputy Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad stated that ceasefire could begin with a "trial" in the Saliheddin and Seif al-Dawla neighborhoods of southwestern Aleppo city. However, on March 1, the Aleppo Revolutionary Council stated its refusal to meet with Staffan de Mistura regarding the ceasefire unless de Mistura presents a "comprehensive" proposal that includes the departure of president Assad and his chief of staff from office and the trial of war criminals.

9. February 28-March 1: Western-backed rebel group Harakat Hazm completely dissolved after JN seized the group's final remaining military base west of Aleppo City. Surviving Hazm fighters merged into the Islamist-led Jabhat Shamiya and into a local group west of Aleppo city named the Ibrat Tammurah Battalions.

10. March 1: JN and rebel forces declared a new offensive in northern Hama province to seize four checkpoints from regime forces. The stated issuing of the operation is to relieve pressure on Dera'a and Aleppo in addition to northern Hama.

11. February 24-25: ISIS reportedly seized Bir al-Qasbih and surrounding areas in the southeastern countryside of Damascus following a joint operation by JN and the Eastern Ghouta Unified Command targeting alleged ISIS members in the town of Kula Batna in Eastern Ghouta.

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A mortar round landed "near" the Askari Shura in Samarra. The source did not report any casualties or damage to the shrine.

IP commander in Diyala General Jareel al-Sumari stated that "security forces" blocked the road between Baghdad and Iraq Kurdistan. He added that the road will be reopened after the area between Mahal-Dhu and Diyala are cleared.

A security source from Diyala stated that three Emergency Response from the "police" and three "special tasks" companies moved from Diyala toward Salah al-Din to support the operation there. A tribal leader stated that "Iraqi forces" arrived on the outskirts of Alam, east of Tikrit, and that ISIS evacuated its casualties from Alam hospital in the area before shifting against the facility.

AIA and IP from Samarra Operations Command (SOC) supported by the "Popular Mobilization" clashed with ISIS and took control of the residential compound in Dour, located two miles southwest of the main area of Dour suburb, and freed 13 previously kidnapped IP members. A report later indicated that the forces took control of Dour supported by Iraqi aircraft and that 3,000 "security elements" are taking part in the operation. Also, an eyewitness told the ICU that the IP reportedly dismantled 100 IEDs on the road between Samarra and Dour, particularly in the Nabi Muhammad area west of Samarra. A dollar VBIED detonated in the Nabi Muhammad area killing one individual and injuring four others.

"Security forces" and the "Popular Mobilization" forces reportedly cleared a toolbar area located 2 km south of Tikrit. The source added that the forces will advance to clear local government buildings in the city.

Three gunmen wearing suicide vests (SVVEST) reportedly clashed with a unit force from the IA and IP in the Mithla area, north of Samarra.

On March 3, IA and IP targeted an "ISI" checkpoint in central Tikrit. On March 2, the combined forces reportedly made several advances. An anonymous security source stated that military reinforcements from the Iraq Special Operations Forces and the "Popular Mobilization" had arrived at Camp Speicher, northwest of Tikrit, and that forces positioned north and west of Tikrit are tasked with clearing the city itself and are "awaiting orders" to do so. A tribal leader from Salah al-Din, Wanas Rura, stated that 4,000 tribal fighters from the province are participating in the operation.

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Intense clashes erupted today as the ISF, Iranian-backed Iraqi Shi'a militias, and Iraqi Sunni anti-ISIS fighters advanced toward ISIS positions on the outskirts of Tikrit and strategic areas south, north, and east of the city. Many reports emerged indicating that the combined forces had seized terrain from ISIS, but those reports remain preliminary and unconfirmed. Due to the commitment of the operation appears to be the deployment of additional forces to areas northeast of Samarra where ISIS has previously enjoyed wide freedom of movement. This deployment likely seeks to prevent ISIS from launching a surprise attack on Samarra that would compel the combined forces to divert resources away from Tikrit and its environs. Samarra is a sensitive area that contains the Imam Ali shrine. ISIS targeted the shrine using indirect fires, although the attack was reported to be unsuccessful. ISIS will likely attempt to conduct similar attacks as the operation continues. The operation does not currently have international coalition air support, as confirmed by a statement from Pentagon spokesman Col Steve Warren. With the exception of operations in Amerli and Baiji, international coalition air support of ISF and militia operations has been absent during military operations where Iranian-backed militias play a major role. Meanwhile, pictures surfaced in Iranian news outlets showing Qassem Soleimani, the commander of Iran's expeditionary Quds Force, in what was portrayed to be areas near Tikrit. This is not the first time Soleimani has appeared during major operations, and his role as an "advisor" to the Iranian-backed militias has been publicized and confirmed by senior military leaders like Hadi al-Ani and Qassem al-Hashimi. He has also appeared in pictures alongside Qassem al-Sadr, leader of Ammar al-Hakim's al-Nujaba group, and Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, leader of Khomeini's Islamic Republic, and others. It is unclear if the absence of the coalition airstrikes is at the request of the militias or because of a desire by the U.S.-led coalition to refrain from working with such militias. The presence of an Iranian general, other Iranian advisors, and Shi'a militias to the group alongside Iraqi Sunni fighters will be a significant test case for the success of similar future anti-ISIS operations. The success of an operation of this importance would be a positive sign for the possibility of an operation to retake other major cities, including Mosul.
ISIS SANCTUARY UPDATE
March 4, 2015

ISIS core control zones inside Iraq and Syria have not shifted significantly since anti-ISIS operations began in June 2014, though anti-ISIS forces have cleared ISIS from several of its major frontier positions in Iraq and Syria. The most significant counter-attacks launched against ISIS were the November 2014 operation to clear ISIS from Baiji and the ongoing March 2015 offensive to clear ISIS from Tikrit (see area on map northwest of Baghdad). The Tikrit operation has the potential to provide the Iraqi Security Forces access to northern Iraq, in support of a future offensive on ISIS’s core terrain. The operation does not, however, meaningfully change ISIS’s battle plan to sustain urban control throughout Iraq and Syria. March 4, 2015

ISIS lost several frontier positions in late 2014. In eastern Iraq, ISIS lost control of several cities including Jalula, Sadia, Udaim, and Suleiman Beg, compromising ISIS’s access to the Hamrin ridge support system. In response ISIS shifted its Hamrin forces to the desert area east of the Tigris. ISIS also lost historic support positions in the Baghdad Belts, specifically in northern Baghdad and southwest of the capital in Jurf al-Sakhar. ISIS still maintains a desert support zone north of Fallujah that provides access to northern Baghdad. ISIS also lost control of Sinjar city and several towns northeast of Tel Afar along its northern frontier in Iraq. These losses, while substantial, have not compromised ISIS’s urban priorities of Mosul and Raqqa.

Two notable losses did complicate ISIS’s defenses in the environs Mosul and Raqqa. ISIS lost the battle for Kobane, northwest of Raqqa, in December 2014, and the Syrian Kurdish YPG subsequently pushed ISIS presence back to the perimeter of Raqqa district, recapturing two strategic bridges along the upper Euphrates (see area on map northwest of Raqqa). In response ISIS consolidated its defenses between Raqqa city and these new Kurdish positions. In Iraq, Kurdish Peshmerga attacks at Gwer and anti-ISIS Sunni tribal activity near Qayarra and Sharqat in early 2015 perforated a critical ISIS stronghold in southern Nineawa. Losses in this area compromise ISIS’s ability to defend Mosul from the south. ISIS reacted to the Peshmerga and Sunni tribal attacks by declaring new governorates in the Jazeera and the Zaab in February 2015, suggesting a greater defensive mobilization around Mosul.

ISIS is expanding visibly on two fronts: in Hasaka province in northeastern Syria (see area on map northeast of Raqqa) and in the Damascus, Qalamoun, and Bekaa valley region in southwestern Syria (see area on map north of Damascus). ISIS lost territory to YPG forces near Tel Hamis and Hasaka city in February 2014, and subsequently increased attacks against the YPG along the road between Tel Tamr and Ras al-Ayn. Beginning in December 2014, ISIS also increased its activity along the Syrian-Lebanese border, establishing a Shari’a court east of Arsal and clashing with the Lebanese Armed Forces in the vicinity of Ras Baalbek. This activity sparked rumors that ISIS intends to establish a “wilayat” within Lebanon in the near term. In addition, past ISIS-linked attacks in Beirut and Tripoli indicate that ISIS may project force into these areas in the future. ISIS also intensified its activities in the environs of Damascus city in early 2015, reasserting its latent historical presence in the southern suburb of Hajar al-Aswad and seizing several positions from opposition forces in the sparselypopulated areas southeast of the capital.

ISIS currently enjoys popular support in some areas of Jordan, Gaza and the West Bank, as demonstrated pro-ISIS demonstrations and arrests of ISIS supporters in the past several months. However, these pockets do not provide a high level of material support to ISIS, and thus are not marked as support zones. ISIS attacked Iraq-Jordan and Iraq-Saudi Arabia border crossings several times in January and February 2015, however, a reminder that ISIS is engaging neighboring states with more than violent rhetoric. ISIS’s current mission, as articulated in the October 2014 issue of its English-language Dabiq magazine, is to both “Remain and Expand.” ISIS will persist in its expansion attempts even as its strategic defenses are tested in Iraq and Syria. ISW will continue to update this ISIS sanctuary map to account for ISIS’s losses and gains.

On February 24, sources at the Joint Operations Command stated that security forces that consisted of Iraqi Army (IA), Federal Police (FP), and Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) had launched a 'clearing operation' targeting alleged safe houses of ISIS in Tikrit. On March 4, one source at the Iraqi Media Network stated that 20 bodies had been recovered from the house in Tikrit where Iraqi forces had killed several ISIS members.

On March 7, sources at the Joint Operations Command stated that the Tikrit operation was ongoing. Sources stated that 93 suspected ISIS members were killed in Tikrit over the last 24 hours.

On March 8, the government of Iraq stated that the Tikrit operation was complete. The sources said that 1,000 bodies had been recovered from Tikrit.

On March 10, the Joint Operations Command stated that the Tikrit operation was ongoing. Sources stated that 1,000 bodies had been recovered from Tikrit.

On March 12, sources at the Joint Operations Command stated that a security operation had been launched in Tikrit to target ISIS. The sources said that 1,000 bodies had been recovered from Tikrit.

On March 14, the Joint Operations Command stated that a security operation had been launched in Tikrit to target ISIS. The sources said that 1,000 bodies had been recovered from Tikrit.
1. On March 7, an anonymous source stated that 30 gunmen in black military attire with modern vehicles stormed an unspecified number of homes in Sadr City and kidnapped 32 individuals. The Interior Ministry stated that unidentified gunmen kidnapped 17 individuals from Sadr City without providing further details. Later, Hakim al-Zamili, chairman of the Security and Defense Committee of the Council of Representatives and leader in the Sadrist Trend, stated that the kidnapped individuals were freed and that the vehicles used in the incident were identified without providing more specifics. He added that the incident was intended to "harm the reputation" of the Sadrist Trend and called for Baghdad Operations Command (BQC) to enforce strict security measures at checkpoints and to investigate the incident.

2. On March 8, a source from the Interior Ministry stated that a VBIED detonated in the Jumilia area, eastern Baghdad, killing two individuals and injuring nine others. A conflicting report indicated that a VBIED in the same area had not been controlled detonation without causing casualties.

3. On March 7, a source from the Interior Ministry stated that a VBIED detonated in the Jumilia area, eastern Baghdad, killing two individuals and injuring nine others. A conflicting report indicated that a VBIED in the same area had been controlled detonation without causing casualties.

4. On March 8, the Interior Ministry stated that forces from the Federal Police (FP) and from the Security and Safety Directorate of the Ministry deployed from Camp Falcon, south of Baghdad, to participate in the ongoing operations in Salah ad-Din. The statement did not specify the size of the force. Meanwhile, a VBIED detonated targeting an FP checkpoint near a local market, south of Baghdad, killing and injuring an unspecified number of individuals.

5. On March 7, combined security forces started to "seize" the Abu Aji area, southeast of Tikrit. On March 8, combined forces carried out joint raids in Abu Aji and searched the area.

6. On March 7, ISF and tribal fighters from Anbar supported by coalition air cover reportedly surrounded Kirkuk, south of Kirkuk, from four areas in preparation for an assault to retake the main area of the city.

7. On March 7, the Interior Ministry stated that ISF launched an attack on Aldean crossing, 5 km away from Telbil crossing. Forces from the 4th Brigade under the Border Guard Command of the 2nd Area repulsed the attack, killing two ISF members and destroying an SVBIED.

8. On March 7, an ISF source reported that air strikes targeted ISF positions in the Mudhament area, southeast of Mosul, killing and injuring several ISF members.

9. On March 7, an anonymous source stated that a VBIED reportedly targeted a local market in Taza, Kirkuk, killing five individuals and injuring 25 others. A conflicting report, however, indicated that the attack was carried out using a VBIED and an SVBIED.

10. On March 8, an anonymous security source stated that "security forces" and "Popular Mobilization" transported what was reported as dozens of families from Dour to Al-Aji and to Samarra. Also, a source from the Interior Ministry stated that the families were "encouraged" to return to their homes.

The battle for Tikrit is likely nearing. Combined forces from the ISF, Iraqi Shi'a militias, and Iraqi Sunni tribal fighters from Salah ad-Din Province have been making gains on the eastern front where the majority of military operations have taken place so far. Control over villages, urban centers, and supply routes in the east will allow the combined forces to stage an assault from the east toward Tikrit City across the river. These recent advances have most likely caused a major disruption to IS's supply lines and to Tikrit, especially towards Baiji and other areas under IS's control in northern Iraq. IS has been reinforcing its defenses in the city and forces from the eastern front have moved into the city to anti-ISIS forces advance, which will likely prolong the fighting in the city. The kidnapping incident in Baghdad is of high significance mainly because of its location. Sadr City is a stronghold for the Sadrist Trend of Moqtada al-Sadr and his militia, the Peace Brigades, which were previously known as the Jaysh al-Mahdi. Recently, Sadr has been increasingly portraying himself and the Peace Brigades as nationalists and taking an aggressive stance toward other Iraq Shi'a militias, likely to solidify his reputation as a national figure with broader appeal. This stance has likely angered other militias that also operate in Baghdad. This incident was therefore likely an act of intra-Shi'a militia rivalries. Although clashes have previously taken place between the Sadists and their rivals, the Al-Aqil (AAH) in Baghdad, they were quickly contained. It will be important to watch for such incidents, especially if they destabilize the security situation in the capital at this critical time.
Since the start of the operation to capture Tikrit and its environs, the ISF, Iraqi Shi'a militias, and Iraqi Sunni tribal fighters from Salah ad-Din have been advancing from two main axes: south, from Samarra, and east, from the direction of Diyala and Kirkuk. So far, the operation has focused on the areas east of Tikrit across the Tigris River; Tikrit itself is not currently the main effort. The combined forces will most likely use the areas they capture to the east to launch further operations to take Tikrit city. As of March 8, the combined forces have taken control of the Ajil Oil field and the main area of Dour district, and are reportedly in the final stages of launching an assault on central Alam. In Dour, the combined forces are dismantling IEDs emplaced by ISIS in the area and there have been no reports of clashes since the local government of Salah ad-Din announced that Dour district was captured on March 6. ISW is therefore changing the status of Dour to reflect control by the ISF and allied forces. Although ISIS set oil wells ablaze, there have been no reports of clashes at Ajil Oil field since March 4, 2015. ISW is changing the status of the field also to reflect control by the ISF and other forces. The situation in Alam, however, remains fluid and the combined forces are likely to launch an assault on the main area of the sub-district soon. ISW is continuing to monitor the situation and changing the status of Alam to under watch.
On March 5, a joint force consisting of Anbar Operations Command (AOC), Baghdad Operations Command (BOC), and tribal fighters supported by IA Aviation launched an operation to clear eastern Garma, northeast of Fallujah. On March 6, a security source in Anbar province stated that a force from the IA was clearing houses in the Garma area when a House-Bomb (HBED) detonated as the force entered the house. Five soldiers were killed and four were injured. On March 6, Military Intelligence launched an attack using “Multiple Launch Rocket System” (MLRS) targeting ISIS “hides” in Garma, killing 13 ISIS members and destroying two Humvees and six vehicles outfitted with heavy machine guns. A source from BOC stated that the initial stages of the operation resulted in the death of 34 ISIS fighters, dismantling 100 IEDs and 22 IEDs rigged to homes, and destroying five vehicles outfitted with heavy machine guns. On March 6, DoD reported that a coalition airstrike near Fallujah struck an ISIS tactical unit and a headquarters, destroying two ISIS buildings and a vehicle.

On March 5, security forces and “Popular Mobilization” successfully entered the al-Ashar area in Dour. Also, an exposed force cleared the village and filmed of former Saddam Hussein era vice president Izzat al-Douri, northeast of Dour. On March 6, Federal Police (FP) forces and the “Popular Mobilization” reportedly continued Dour while an area targeted inside the area. Combined forces blocked the road between Dour and Al-Ashar and entered Dour from the north, initiating intensive clashes with ISIS reaching central Dour. A source from the Joint Operations Command and a “local” source from Salah ad-Din stated that the combined forces “infiltrated” Dour. These forces began to disperse IEDs in the area and established an alternate route to avoid the IEDs placed on the main road.

On March 6, a leader of the Iraqi Sunni tribal fighters in Salah ad-Din, Khalid al-Jburi, stated that the combined forces entered Dour airport while a later report indicated that these forces seized the entire airport following clashes with ISIS.

On March 6, a source from the FP stated that combined forces cordoned off Amal and Albo Ajiq and that IA Aviation was launching strikes inside the areas. The source added that four FP battalions deployed from Baghdad to participate in Salah ad-Din operations. Also, a MOI spokesperson stated that the interior minister arrived in the area and expressed the likelihood of “storming” Al-Ashar the following day if surrounding areas are clarified.

On March 5, IS5 attacked a gathering of “security forces” in al-Mahidi village with eight SVBIEDs; however, “security forces” killed four of the attackers before they reached their target. Also, ISIS attackers used three SVBIEDs to target security forces in Tel Givha area, east of Tikrit on the Tikrit Kirkuk highway, killing four security forces members and wounding 28 others. A joint force consisting of IA, PIP, “Popular Mobilization,” and tribal fighters reportedly surrounded ISIS in Ajiq Oil Field and later seized the area although ISIS set fire to the oil wells.

On March 6, a security source in Salah ad-Din province stated that ISIS launched an attack on a “Popular Mobilization” security checkpoint in al-Sunolat village, north of Dujail sub-district, located in southern Salah ad-Din. Five “Popular Mobilization” members were killed and eight others were injured, including two civilians, while ISIS suffered “scores” of casualties.

On March 3, a member of the Taqaddum Council, Haj Ahmad al-Kubasi, stated that ISIS shelled houses in the residential complex in al-Taqaddum sub-district, west of Murtad district, with rockets and mortars, killing two women and a child and injuring 10 civilians. The member also stated that the humanitarian conditions in al-Taqaddum, especially inside the residential complex, are dire and require immediate assistance from the central government. On March 5, eight ISIS attackers, including two “suicide bombers,” attacked the jobba area north of al-Akhfah. A joint force from the IA and the Golden Division killed all eight attackers.

On March 4, an anonymous military source stated that Peshmerga were coordinated by coalition airmen attacked ISIS positions in the east area of Sinjar district, west of Mosul, killing 20 ISIS members. The DoD reported that three coalition airmen “near Sinjar” struck a tactical unit and destroyed an armored vehicle and three ISIS vehicles.

On March 4, the Defense Ministry (MoD) stated that a force from military intelligence “shelled” an ISIS “military repositor” in the al-Kasbah area, north of Fallujah near the city, killing 33 ISIS members and destroying 40 US-made “missiles” held by ISIS. A force from military intelligence also reportedly destroyed a training camp near the Towfik Mosque in the al-Kasbah area in northern Fallujah. MoD also stated that a force from military intelligence “bombed” an IED planted on al-Aqidiya street in Fallujah, killing four ISIS members and an ISIS “official” responsible for “booby-traps.”

The operation to retake Tikrit continued today, although Tikrit city itself does not appear to be the immediate priority for the combined forces. Since the start of the ground operation on March 2, the eastern and southern axes have been the primary focus. The forces that moved from Diyala and from Sanaa have been moving steadily and clearing smaller villages and areas on their way to Al-Ashar, northeast of Tikrit, and toward Dour, southeast of Tikrit. Dour and Al-Ashar represent the largest areas of ISIS concentration east of Tikrit where combat operations are concentrated for now. If the combined forces can control these areas, then they will likely use them as staging areas to advance west toward Tikrit city. An assault from the east will likely be accompanied by a ground assault from the direction of Camp Speicher, where forces have not yet fully engaged. The Tikrit operation is not the only operation launched against ISIS strongholds in Iraq. Other forces from Anbar Operations Command (AOC), Baghdad Operations Command (BOC), Shi’a militias, and reportedly tribal fighters, initiated a military operation targeting the outskirts of Garma, a hub for anti-government armed groups including ISIS. Garma’s geographic proximity to Fallujah and the northern and western Baghdad belts makes it an initial defensive position on the way to Fallujah, a launchpad for attacks on the ISF and militias near Baghdad, and likely a transit zone for anti-government groups to shift resources. ISF and militias have thus been deployed around Garma since the fall of Fallujah in January 2014 and have launched multiple operations to clear it. The fact that the ISF, militias, and anti-ISIS Sunni fighters launched two concurrent operations against separate ISIS strongholds is significant. This is a departure from previous anti-ISIS operations that prioritized one area at a time. Nevertheless, the operation near Garma does not appear to be significant in size as operations around Tikrit.
On March 5, a joint force consisting of Anbar Operations Command (AOC), Baghdad Operations Command (BOC), and tribal fighters supported by IA Aviation launched an operation to clear eastern Garma, northeast of Fallujah. On March 6, a security source in Anbar province stated that a force from the IA was clearing houses in the Garma area when a House-Bomb (HBED) detonated as the force entered the house. The soldiers were killed and four were injured. On March 6, Military Intelligence launched an attack using "Multiple Launch Rocket Systems" targeting ISIS "bunkers" in Garma, killing 13 ISIS members and destroying two Humvees and six vehicles outfitted with heavy machines guns. A source from BOC stated that the initial stages of the operation resulted in the death of 34 ISIS fighters, 100 EIDs, and 20 vehicles destroyed, and destroying five vehicles outfitted with heavy machines guns. On March 6, DoD reported that a coalition airstrike near Fallujah, targeting an ISIS tactical unit and a headquarters, destroyed two ISIS buildings and two vehicles.

On March 5, "security forces" and "Popular Mobilization" successfully entered the al-Anbar area in Door. A combined force cleared the village and arrested one of the former Saddam Hussein era vice president Issa al-Douri, northeast of Door. On March 6, Federal Police (FP) forces and the "Popular Mobilization" reportedly arrested Door while a Coalition Air Aviation targeted trucks inside the area. Combined forces blocked the road between Door and Al-Amin and entered Door from the north, launching intense clashes with ISIS near the northern villages. A source from the Joint Operations Command said that ISIS forces had been "denied" Door. These forces began to disperse EIDs in the area and established an "alternative route" to avoid the EIDs implanted on the main road.

On March 6, a leader of Iraqi Sunni tribal fighters in Salah ad-Din, Khalid al-Jumaa, stated that the combined forces entered Door. A source later reported that these forces seized the entire airport following clashes with ISIS.

On March 6, a source from the FP stated that combined forces entered Al-Amin and Al-Hujj, stating that IA Aviation was launching strikes inside the area. The source added that four FP battalions deployed from Baghdad to participate in the security operation. Also, an FS spokesperson said that the interior minister arrived in the area and expressed the likelihood of "informing" Al-Amin of the following day's surroundings in the area are cleared.

The operation to retake Tikrit continued today, although Tikrit city itself does not appear to be the immediate priority for the combined forces. Since the start of the ground operation on March 2, the eastern and southern axes have been the primary focus. The forces that moved from Diyala and Samarra have been moving steadily and clearing smaller villages and areas on their way to Al-Tikrit. The forces that moved from Dour and Al-Amin are Al-Quds and the north of Tikrit, toward Dour, southeast of Tikrit. Dour and Al-Amin represent the largest areas of ISIS concentration east of Tikrit where combat operations are concentrated for now. If the combined forces manage to control these areas, then they are likely to be the next target according to the Kenz Souleimani, where forces have not yet fully engaged. The Timbuktu operation is not the only operation launched against ISIS strongholds in Iraq. Other forces from BOC and AOC have been deployed to other areas, targeting ISIS in Tigris and the northern areas of Tikrit.

On March 5, IS declared an attack on a "Popular Mobilization" security checkpoint in the Sumeel village, northwest of Jurf al-Sakhar, with an estimated 28 casualties. The operation was launched around 10:30 p.m. and resulted in the death of four ISIS fighters, including two civilians, while ISI's fighters suffered "loot" from the ISIs.

On March 5, a security source in Salah al-Din province reported that ISIs launched an attack on a "Popular Mobilization" security checkpoint in Jurf al-Sakhar, north of Dujail sub-district, located in the Islamic State District. Five "Popular Mobilization" members had been killed and nine were wounded, including two civilians, while ISIs suffered "loot" from the ISIs.

On March 5, a security source in Jurf al-Sakhar, located inside the Islamic State District, reported that ISIs launched an attack on a "Popular Mobilization" security checkpoint in Jurf al-Sakhar, northwest of Dujail sub-district, located in the Islamic State District. Five "Popular Mobilization" members had been killed and nine were wounded, including two civilians, while ISIs suffered "loot" from the ISIs.

On March 5, a security source in Salah al-Din province reported that ISIs launched an attack on a "Popular Mobilization" security checkpoint in Jurf al-Sakhar, northwest of Dujail sub-district, located in the Islamic State District. Five "Popular Mobilization" members had been killed and nine were wounded, including two civilians, while ISIs suffered "loot" from the ISIs.

On March 5, a security source in Salah al-Din province reported that ISIs launched an attack on a "Popular Mobilization" security checkpoint in Jurf al-Sakhar, northwest of Dujail sub-district, located in the Islamic State District. Five "Popular Mobilization" members had been killed and nine were wounded, including two civilians, while ISIs suffered "loot" from the ISIs.
Iraq: As of 2.3.15

1. A mortar round landed near the Askari Shafe in Samarra. The source did not report any casualties or damage to the station.

2. IP commander in Divisa General Zain al-Shamari stated that "security forces" blocked the road between Baghdad and Kirkuk. He added that the road will be reopened after the area between Salua and Divisa is cleared.

3. A security source from Divisa stated that three Emergency Battalions from the "police" and three special police units from Divisa toward Salua and Divisa toward the operation area of the operation. A "tribal" leader stated that "Iraqi forces" arrived on the outskirts of Ahran, east of Tikrit, and that "IS" evacuated its facilities from Ahran to the area and prepared to shell against the facility.

4. AIA and IP from Samarra Operations Command (SOC) supported by the "Popular Mobilization" clashed with "IS" and took control of the residential compound in Door, located two miles south of the main area of Door district and fixed 13 previously kidnapped IP members. A report later indicated that the force took control of Door supported by Iraqi aircraft and that 20,000 "security elements" are taking part in the operation.

5. In the Shaida Mohammad area northeast of Samarra, a tank VBED detonated in the Shaida Mohammad area killing one individual and injuring four others.

6. Three journalists wearing Suicide Vests (SVESs) reportedly clashed with a joint force from the IA and IP in Mishba area south of Samarra.

7. On March 1, IA and IP attacked "IS" holdouts in central Tikrit. On March 2, the alleged forces reportedly made several advances. An anonymous security source stated that military reinforcements from the Iraqi Special Operations Forces and "Popular Mobilization" had arrived at Camp Speicher west of Tikrit, and that forces positioned north and west of Tikrit are tasked with clearing the city itself and are "awaiting orders" to do so. A tribal leader from Salua and Wanaa Jeera, stated that 4,500 tribal fighters from the province are participating in the operation.

8. Commander of Ja'fari and Baija Operations Command (JBOC) General Dhih Kadhum stated that forces from the IA, FIA, and the Golden Division, supported by the international coalition, launched an operation to clear the joba area, north of Baghedi. An anonymous security source stated that "IS" executed "dozens" of youths in Joba before "fleeing" to the east of Baghedi.


10. An anonymous security source stated that "IS" destroyed buildings in the Ghilzahi camp, located south of Mosul, using IEDs. Also, a "local" source stated that "IS" destroyed the buildings of Nineveh Operations Command and the Anti-Terrorism Directorate in Mosul using IEDs.

11. "Security forces" supported by the "Popular Mobilization" reportedly entered Jibdha neighborhood, north of Tikrit, and killed dozens of "IS" members and taking control of "some" areas in the neighborhood. The clashes also killed eight members of the "Popular Mobilization" and injured 42 others.

Intense clashes erupted today in the ISF, Iranian-backed Shia militias, and Sunni anti-IS militia, intensifying the struggle for control in Tikrit and areas surrounding it. Additionally, "ISF" forces are believed to have launched a surprise attack on Samarra, leading to the displacement of additional forces in central Iraq. The situation remains tense, with reports of casualties and damages on both sides. The battle for Tikrit is critical, as it holds strategic importance for both the Iraqi government and the international coalition. The ongoing fighting is expected to continue, with "IS" and its allies attempting to hold onto positions amid increasing pressure from the combined forces. The situation is closely monitored by regional powers, including Iran and Turkey, who have vested interests in the outcome of the conflict. The international coalition, composed of various nations, continues to provide support to Iraqi security forces, highlighting the collaborative efforts to combat "IS" and restore stability to the region.
Air Strikes in Syria and Iraq: As of 1.3.15

Air strikes in Iraq and Syria

Iraq 1,367  Syria 1,059

Figs are up to 1 March 2015
Source: US Central Command

Air Strikes in Syria and Iraq: As of 1.3.15

Confirmed air strikes up to 1 March 2015

Iraq 1,367  Syria 1,059

Note: Strikes have not been mapped when the precise location was not given or was unclear.
Source: Institute for the Study of War, US Central Command

Air Strikes in Syria and Iraq: As of 10.3.15

Confirmed air strikes up to 10 March 2015

Iraq 1,431  Syria 1,093

- IS control
- IS support
- Kurdistan Government-administered

Note: Strikes have not been mapped when the precise location was not given or was unclear.
Source: Institute for the Study of War, US Central Command
1. March 2: According to the Syria Observatory for Human Rights, a new pro-regime political organisation was established in Hasaka province under the leadership of the former government of Hasaka province.

2. March 8: Pro-regime forces established a new Siwa militia in Homs after recruiting members from the town of al-Suwayda in the southern countryside of Homs province. The formation of this new group is seen as a response to the growing threat posed by the rebels in the area.

3. March 6: A rebel child was killed in a series of clashes between the Free Syrian Army and government forces in the town of al-Quds in the northern countryside of Hama province. The conflict has escalated in recent weeks, with both sides accusing each other of violating the ceasefire agreement.

4. March 4: Jabhat al-Nusra, a major rebel group in Syria, announced that it has entered the town of Darkoush in the northern countryside of Aleppo province, increasing the pressure on the government forces in the area.

5. February 12: Regime forces continued their assault on the town of al-Hashimeh in the western countryside of Hama province. The government has been fighting to secure the area from rebel groups, who have been using the town as a base for their operations.

6. March 5-6: An unknown explosion was reported in the town of al-Quds in the northern countryside of Hama province, killing several regime forces. The cause of the explosion is unclear, but it is believed to have been a result of a rebel attack.

7. March 6: A group of rebel fighters attacked a government position in the town of al-Quds, killing several regime forces. The attack was claimed by the Free Syrian Army.

8. March 2: A group of rebel fighters attacked a government position in the town of al-Quds, killing several regime forces. The attack was claimed by the Free Syrian Army.

9. March 2: A group of rebel fighters attacked a government position in the town of al-Quds, killing several regime forces. The attack was claimed by the Free Syrian Army.

10. March 8: A group of rebel fighters attacked a government position in the town of al-Quds, killing several regime forces. The attack was claimed by the Free Syrian Army.

Control of Areas in Syria: As of 13.3.15

Source: http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/03/12/world/middleeast/syria-civil-war-after-four-years-map.html
Government Control of Areas in Syria: As of 13.3.15

Source: http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/03/12/world/middleeast/syria-civil-war-after-four-years-map.html
Islamic State Control of Areas in Syria: As of 13.3.15
Aid and the Humanitarian Crisis
Overall, at least 24,015 civilians have been killed or injured in Iraq during the first eight months of 2014. Of these, at least 8,493 civilians were killed and 15,782 were wounded. From the spread of the conflict from Anbar to other areas of Iraq, UNAMI/OHCHR recorded at least 11,159 civilian casualties between 1 June and 31 August. This number includes at least 4,692 civilians killed, and 6,467 wounded. The actual numbers could be much higher. Additionally, the number of civilians who have died from the secondary effects of violence, such as lack of access to basic food, water or medicine, after fleeing their homes or who remained trapped in areas under ISIL control or in areas of conflict are unknown. Children, pregnant women, persons with disabilities, and elderly people have been particularly vulnerable.

As of 30 August 2014, almost 1.8 million persons have been displaced within Iraq – 50 per cent (862,458) are in KR-I; 343,284 in Anbar; and 503,436 in other areas of Iraq. The Kurdistan Region Government (KRG) has established a number of camps within the region housing at least 26,000 people, while the remainder are housed within the communities where they have sought refuge, many in unfinished buildings, schools, mosques, churches, and other premises.

With the initial takeover of Mosul by ISIL on 10 June, some 500,000 people fled the city. On 22 July, the Chaldean Patriarch informed UNAMI that about 20,000 Christians had left Mosul and were sheltering with relatives and community members in different locations in the Nineveh Plains and KR-I...Beginning on 2 August, entire villages of ethnic and religious minorities began to flee from areas in Sinjar District, as well as Zummar and Rabeea’a sub-districts, in Tal Afar in Ninewa Governorate as ISIL fighters took control of the areas.

On 5 August, the United Nations International Child’s Fund (UNICEF) reported that families who had fled to Jabal Sinjar, including up to 25,000 children, were in immediate need of assistance, including drinking water and sanitation services. It was also reported that around 40 Yezidi children had died as a consequence of hunger, thirst and dehydration. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that as of 12 August, an estimated 20,000 to 30,000 people were still displaced in that area and access to them was limited.

The advance of ISIL on 6 August into areas of the Nineveh Plains and Shirkhan District as far as Makhmour on the border of Erbil Governorate sparked a further mass exodus of up to 180,000 individuals into areas of KR-I and other areas of Iraq, including Christians, Shabak, Turkmen, Yezidi, Shi’a Arabs and Sunni Arabs. Following the raising of the siege of Jabal Sinjar on 14 August, tens of thousands of Yezidi civilians who had been trapped there had the opportunity to escape. Most fled via Syria with the assistance of the Syrian based YPG into KR-I.

According to United Nations’ agencies, two thirds of the displaced persons were located in areas under the control of ISIL and associated armed groups or were in areas affected by the conflict – rendering access to them for the provision of humanitarian assistance particularly difficu

Iraq: The IDP Effect as of June

Source: UNHCR
Syrian Refugees in Iraq as of August 2014

Source: UNAMI,
Iraq: The IDP Effect as of August 28

30 August 2014: A comprehensive count carried out jointly by the Kurdistan Region Government (KRG) and the United Nations indicates that some 850,000 Iraqis have been displaced and sought refuge in all three Kurdistan Region Governorates since January 2014. According to the Kurdistan Region Ministry of Planning and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) the vast majority of the recently displaced people – 64 per cent - have sought refuge in the Duhok Governorate.

Of the 1.8M Iraqis displaced nationwide, it is estimated that over 600,000 people were displaced this month alone. This increase is due to an upsurge of violence in various parts of the country, particularly Ninewa, Diyala and Anbar.

The latest figures compiled by the KRG under the leadership of the Minister of Planning and IOM’s Displacement Tracking Matrix, show that the displaced population are now living in more than 1,000 sites in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq alone.

The latest waves of IDPs to the KR-I, more than 850,000 in 2014, plus some 216,000 Syrian refugees registered by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), and previous large population movements of around 335,000 which took place prior to 2014, brings the total number of people who sought refuge in the KR-I to 1.4 million. These latest waves add to the very heavy burden borne by the people and government of the KR-I.

Duhok Governorate’s seven districts now host over half a million people seeking shelter, food, water, medicine and protection after the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) seized territory in Sinjar and neighbouring communities prompting them to flee. Since

Source: UNHCR, https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?pli=1#search/map/148287df975f2b13?projector=1
Iraq: Humanitarian Snapshot as of 8.28.14

SITUATION OVERVIEW
As a result of massive displacement to northern Iraq since 3 August, the United Nations has increased its planning number of people displaced in Iraq to 1.8 million. This is an increase of 250,000 from the previous planning figure of 1.2 million. The IDP number does not include people displaced in Iraq before 2014, nor does it include the 225,000 Syrian refugees in northern Iraq. Population movement to Erbil and Dahuk governorates (Kurdistan Region) has been stabilizing. Local authorities in Dahuk report that there are now over 400,000 IDPs in the Governorate. Displacement from Nineawa and Anbar continues to central and southern governorates (Kerbala, Najaf, Qadisiyya, Baghdad, Basra), where local authorities are overstretched and unable to respond to increasing demands in basic services.

DISPLACEMENT SINCE 9 JUNE

TIMELINE OF EVENTS
March
Intense fighting centred in Anbar Governorate cities of Fallujah and Ramadi increases the number of IDPs to 350,000.

April
Continued fighting increases the number of IDPs to approximately 100,000.

January
Approximately 65,000 people are internally displaced due to fighting in Anbar Governorate.

July
Access to basic services in areas controlled by armed groups deteriorating.

June
The conflict increases the number of IDPs from Anbar to 500,000 and from central and northern parts of Iraq to 650,000.

August
Violence in northern Iraq and several regions of the country has resulted in an increase in the number of displaced Iraqis.

Source: OCHA Iraq @OCHAIraq, Aug 31, 2014 pic.twitter.com/FbMSBXC1c9
Iraq: Humanitarian Snapshot as of 11.10.14

SITUATION OVERVIEW
There are now 5.2 million people in need of urgent humanitarian assistance across Iraq. This includes:

- 1.6 million people displaced since January 2014
- 1.5 million individuals in host communities
- 1.7 million vulnerable Iraqis who are not IDPs but live in areas directly impacted by the conflict.
- 215,000 Syrian refugees.

Vulnerable groups in Iraq continue to suffer the cumulative effects of civil war, mass displacement, social tension, and a considerably weakened social sector. This situation is compounded by the low quality of essential health, water, and sanitation services caused by decades of under-investment in social infrastructure.

Source: OCHA Iraq @OCHAIraq, Aug 31, 2014 pic.twitter.com/FbMSBXC1c9
Syria: 9.3 Million of Concern: 2.9 Million Refugees Outside Country; 6.5+ Million IDPs = 52% of Total of 17.9 Million

Syrian Refugees to 21.9.14

About three million people have fled abroad to escape the fighting in Syria. Most have gone to Lebanon and Turkey - but a significant number have also gone to Iraq.

In addition, the UN estimates there are 1.8m Iraqis who have been forced to leave their homes to escape the conflict with IS and are now living in temporary accommodation elsewhere in the country.

US Aid to Syria: As of 14.9.2014 - I

Syria: 3.2 Million Refugees Outside Country: 1 November 2014

Syria: Total Civilians at Risk: 1 November 2014

KEY FIGURES

10.8 million people in need inside Syria

6.45 million internally displaced persons

191,369 persons killed

* source: OHCHR - 22nd August

BESIEGED/HARD TO ACCESS AREAS

4.6 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in besieged/hard to access areas

50% of them are children

FUNDING: SHARP 2014

$ 2.28 billion requested (US$)

38.6% funded

$ 879 million received (US$)

Syria: Total Civilians at Risk out of Population of 17,951,000: December 31 2014

12.2 million people in need inside Syria
7.6 million internally displaced persons
191,369 persons killed

IN SYRIA

BESIEGED/HARD TO ACCESS AREAS
4.6 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in besieged/hard to access areas


REFUGEES OUTSIDE IN SYRIA

This figure includes 2.2 million Syrians registered by UNHCR in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon, 1.5 million Syrians registered by the Government of Turkey, as well as 24,055 Syrian refugees registered in North Africa.

Regional demographic breakdown below is based on available data from Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon.

Registered Syrian Refugees 3,727,642

Total Persons of Concern 3,809,339

Male (48.7%) Age 9.2% 0 - 4
10.9% 5 - 11
6.6% 12 - 17
20.6% 18 - 59
1.4% 60 +

(51.3%) Female Age 8.8% 0 - 4
10.3% 5 - 11
6.3% 12 - 17
24.2% 18 - 59
1.7% 60 +
Syrian Refugees to 20.2.15

Source: UNHCR, Reliefweb (Figures up to 20 February 2015)

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

• 10.8 million People in Need of Humanitarian Assistance in Syria
• 5.5 million Children Affected by the Crisis in Syria
• 6.4 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Syria
• 3+ million Syrians Displaced to Neighboring Countries

HUMANITARIAN FUNDING TO SYRIA HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE FY 2012 – 2014*

• USAID/OFDA: $570,019,529
• USAID/FFP: $971,715,017
• State/PRM $1,359,865,086
• Total U.S. Government (USG) Assistance to the Syria Humanitarian Response: $2,901,599,632

Secretary of State John F. Kerry announced on September 12, 2014 the United States is providing nearly $500 million in additional humanitarian aid to help those affected by the war in Syria. Total U.S. humanitarian assistance since the start of the conflict in March 2011 is now more than $2.9 billion. The United States remains the single-largest donor of humanitarian aid for those affected by Syria crisis.

Since the crisis began, the USG has provided more than $1.4 billion to assist refugees and host communities in the region and more than $1.4 billion to assist people in need across all 14 governorates inside Syria.

Of the newly announced funds, USAID/FFP is contributing more than $74.2 million for continued food assistance inside Syria and in the region through partnerships with the U.N. World Food Program (WFP) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

In addition, State/PRM is providing nearly $322 million in new funding to meet the urgent needs of refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and other persons of concern fleeing Syria including through education, shelter, emergency relief items, health services, gender-based violence prevention and response, psychosocial support activities, and WASH assistance.

More than $69 million of the State/PRM assistance will support activities inside of Syria and more than $252 million will support humanitarian activities in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey.

The additional funding also includes more than $98 million from USAID/OFDA to support health care services, the distribution of emergency relief items, WASH programs, and protection activities across the country.

Of the newly announced USG funding, more than $99.5 million supports existing humanitarian aid operations carried out by NGOs conducting cross-border relief efforts that assist millions of conflict-affected Syrians.
US Aid to Syria: CRS

Table 1. U.S. Foreign Assistance for Syria, FY2013-FY2015 Original Request
(In thousands of current dollars; fiscal year denotes source of funds)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Account</th>
<th>FY2013 (Actual)</th>
<th>FY2014 (Estimate)</th>
<th>FY2015 (Request)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ESF</td>
<td>20,780 (OCO)</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>125,000 (OCO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INCLE</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>10,000 (OCO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NADR</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PKO</td>
<td>38,620 (OCO)</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FFP</td>
<td>18,338</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total*</td>
<td>77,738</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>155,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: State Department and Foreign Operations, Congressional Budget Justification, FY2015.
Notes: FY2014 estimates for Syria spending were not available as of April 2014. Funds appropriated in fiscal years prior to FY2013 have supported U.S. assistance programs since 2011. n.a. = not available.

a. The FY2013 total figure does not reflect all of the $287 million allocated for support to the Syrian opposition to date. The FY2015 Syria request includes, but the table does not show, $1.1 billion within Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA-OCO) and International Disaster Assistance (IDA-OCO) accounts expected to be used for humanitarian assistance related to the Syria conflict.

Proposed Expansion of Lethal and Nonlethal Assistance

Congressional Proposals

In the 113th Congress, proposals to authorize the expanded provision of nonlethal and lethal assistance in Syria with various provisos have been introduced or considered in committees, and would place various conditions on assistance, establish reporting requirements, grant diverse authorities, and set different time limitations.

- On September 15, the House Rules Committee approved consideration of an amendment introduced by Representative Howard "Buck" McKeon (hereinafter the McKeon Amendment)97 to the proposed FY2015 continuing resolution (H.J.Res. 124) that represents a counterproposa to the President's revised request for assistance authority.
- The Senate Armed Services Committee reported version of the FY2015 National Defense Authorization Act (Section 1209 of S. 2410) would authorize the Department of Defense, with the concurrence of the State Department, to train and equip vetted members of select Syrian opposition forces for limited purposes through the year 2018.
- S. 960, the Syria Transition Support Act of 2013, was approved by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee as amended by a 15-3 vote in May 2013.
- H.R. 1327, the Free Syria Act of 2013, was introduced in March 2013.


Armed Conflict in Syria: Overview and U.S. Response

Congressional Research Service 27
Number of Syrians Displaced: 3.13-1.15

Source: FAILING SYRIA ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONSIN PROTECTING AND ASSISTING CIVILIANS IN SYRIA, http://www.savethechildren.org/atf/cf/%7B9def2ebe-10ae-432c-9bd0-df91d2eba74a%7D/FAILINGSYRIA_REPORT_MARCH2015.PDF
Roughly a quarter of Syria's schools (over 4,000) have been damaged, destroyed or used for other purposes. According to the United Nations Children’s Fund, 160 children were killed in attacks on schools in 2014. In January 2015, NGOs reported attacks on schools that resulted in at least 37 deaths, including nine children. Since UNSCR 2139 was passed, an additional 500,000 children are estimated to be out of school compared with 2013, bringing the total to 1.6 million.

Source: FAILING SYRIA ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS IN PROTECTING AND ASSISTING CIVILIANS IN SYRIA, http://www.savethechildren.org/atf/cf/%7B9def2ebe-10ae-432c-9bd0-df91d2eba74a%7D/FAILINGSYRIA_REPORT_MARCH2015.PDF
By mid-2014, OCHA estimated that 10.8 million of Syria’s 22 million population was affected by the conflict and in need of humanitarian assistance, including 6.5 million internally displaced, often multiple times – 50 per cent more than in 2013. If a comprehensive political solution is not reached, the number affected is expected to grow in 2015. Syria is hosting more than 33,000 asylum-seekers and refugees mainly from Iraq, with smaller numbers coming from Afghanistan and Somalia. Though a significant decrease from previous years, this trend may be reversed in 2015 if there are any new arrivals of Iraqi refugees. In August 2014, approximately 95,000 people displaced by violence in Iraq entered the north-easter Hassakeh governorate, although the majority proceeded onwards to the Kurdistan region to seek safety.

Source: FAILING SYRIA ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS IN PROTECTING AND ASSISTING CIVILIANS IN SYRIA
http://www.savethechildren.org/atf/cf/%7B9def2ebe-10ae-432c-9bd0-df91d2eb74a%7D/FAILINGSYRIA_REPORT_MAY2015.PDF

UNHCR Plans for 2015 (12.14)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNHCR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of offices 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total personnel 274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International staff 52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National staff 69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JPOs 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others 152</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10.8 million OCHA estimation (mid-2014) of overall number of people affected by the conflict, including 6.5 million internally displaced

USD 362.5 million Overall funding requirements

4 million People of concern (PoC)* targeted to receive core relief items

750,000 PoC targeted to have access to primary health care and life-saving emergency interventions

26,000 Refugees and asylum-seekers targeted for assistance.

130,000 IDPs targeted to benefit from shelter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning figures¹</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of population</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Refugees</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Asylum-seekers</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internally displaced</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stateless</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ UNHCR
Number of offices 8
Total personnel 274
International staff 52
National staff 69
JPOs 1
Others 152

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### Total USG Humanitarian Assistance to Syria and Neighboring Countries in FY 2014

**Total USG Humanitarian Assistance to Syria and Neighboring Countries Provided in FY 2013**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assistance</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USAID/OFDA</td>
<td>$1,364,193,517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAID/FPF</td>
<td>$383,353,221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State/PRM</td>
<td>$582,724,280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,218,367,818</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total USG Humanitarian Assistance to Syria and Neighboring Countries Provided in FY 2012**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assistance</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USAID/OFDA</td>
<td>$19,695,864</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAID/FPF</td>
<td>$47,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State/PRM</td>
<td>$51,539,941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$119,055,805</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total USG Humanitarian Assistance to Syria and Neighboring Countries in FY 2012, FY 2013, FY 2014, and FY 2015**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assistance</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USAID/OFDA</td>
<td>$570,037,037</td>
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<tr>
<td>USAID/FPF</td>
<td>$1,104,580,890</td>
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<tr>
<td>State/PRM</td>
<td>$1,371,725,086</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$3,046,343,013</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Public Opinion Polls
No One Follows Where No One Leads: Need to Sustain Uncertain US Domestic Support

No meaningful support for conventional ground troops

Public divides on providing arms and ammunition to the Kurdish military forces who are opposing the insurgents, with 45 percent in favor, 49 percent opposed.

Increase in support for U.S. military action among Democrats and political independents – up by 10 and 8 points, respectively, while remaining largely stable and higher among Republicans. Similarly, support has increased by 8 to 12 points among liberals, moderates and those who say they’re “somewhat” conservative, while holding steady among strong conservatives.

Two-thirds of Democrats and 63 percent of liberals approve of the president’s handling of the situation, falling among political independents and moderates (to 37 and 44 percent, respectively) and plummeting to a quarter of conservatives and two in 10 Republicans.

In June, among Democrats who opposed air strikes, 74 percent also approved of his work on the issue; today it’s only 56 percent.

ABC NEWS/WASHINGTON POST POLL: Iraq
EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE AFTER 7 a.m. Wednesday, Aug. 20, 2014
Rise in Support from June to August

For the first time since January, President Obama is polling a 50 percent approval rating on an issue: his handling of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.

The newest [WaPo-ABC poll](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-fix/wp/2014/10/01/president-obama-is-winning-on-a-foreign-policy-issue-for-a-change/) shows 50 percent approve of Obama's handling of the Islamic State, as compared to 44 percent who disapprove. That's an improvement from August, when the question referenced only Iraq and not Syria, and 42 percent of Americans gave Obama a vote of confidence.

Obama's new polling heights come as Americans overwhelmingly approve of the airstrikes he ordered in Syria. Seven in 10 Americans (70 percent) support the airstrikes -- up from 65 percent in early September.

His decision to send American forces to train Iraqi troops and coordinate airstrikes against the Islamic State in that country is less popular, but still gets positive marks: 53 percent support and 44 percent opposition.

The most supportive political group on each of these counts is Republicans, 80 percent of whom back the airstrikes in Syria and 60 percent of whom support the effort in Iraq. At the same time, these very same Republicans only give Obama a 30 percent overall approval rating on his handling of the Islamic State -- which depresses the topline number above.

Here's how Obama fares on previous foreign policy issues tested by WaPo-ABC polls this year:

- 46 percent: Malaysian Airline plane being shot down over Ukraine (7/27)
- 45 percent: situation in Afghanistan (6/1)
- 42 percent: situation in Iraq (8/17)
- 39 percent: situation between Israel and Palestinians (7/27)
- 39 percent: Bowe Bergdahl situation (6/8)
- 39 percent: situation with Iran (1/23)
- 38 percent: international affairs (9/7)
- 34 percent: situation involving Russia and Ukraine (4/27)
- 33 percent: situation in Syria (1/23)

The results on military action align with longstanding public attitudes on military intervention, with lower-risk air strikes far preferred than more-committing ground combat.

Support for military action also can rely on the presence of a clear threat – which the public sees in ISIS (six in 10 in early September called it a “very” serious threat to U.S. vital interests) – and broad international participation, which Obama has worked to achieve.

Among groups, support for air strikes is almost the same among men and women, at 72 and 69 percent, respectively, despite customarily higher support for military action among men.

Support for sending U.S. forces in an advisory role reverts to form, dropping by 11 points among men but further, by 23 points, among women.

There are risks for Obama; sending advisers is least popular among some of his core support groups, including half or fewer of nonwhites, liberals, younger and lower-income adults, as well as women.

Young adults, age 18 to 29, also are comparatively skeptical about air strikes – 55 percent support them, vs. 80 percent of those age 50 and older.

Regardless of divisions about advisers on the ground, the poll indicates the level of public antipathy toward ISIS. Support for air strikes against the group in Iraq started at 45 percent in June, rose to 54 percent in August and then to 71 percent in early September, when 65 percent also said they’d support extending those strikes to Syria.

With that air campaign now underway, its 70 percent support reflects a broad level of agreement in fractious political times.
Estimated Costs to the US of the Fight
The United States has likely spent between $780 million and $930 million in its military campaign against the Islamic State militant group so far, and it will likely cost between $200 million and $320 million per month going forward if conducted with about 2,000 U.S. service members on the ground, according to a new report published Monday.

Those costs would grow to between $350 million and $570 million per month if the pace of the airstrikes increases and 5,000 U.S. troops are deployed, according to the report, released by the independent Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments in Washington. On an annual basis, lower-intensity air operations could cost $2.4 billion to $3.8 billion per year, the report said. The annual cost would jump to between $4.2 billion and $6.8 billion if the pace of airstrikes increases and is sustained.

The United States reported completing about 220 airstrikes in Iraq since Aug. 8, and about 40 more in Syria since they began Sept. 23. On Monday, the U.S. military announced that along with partner nations, it had launched eight airstrikes in Syria. Separately, the United States carried out three airstrikes in Iraq. In addition to the airstrikes, the U.S. Navy also has launched at least 47 Tomahawk cruise missiles, which each cost more than $1 million, into Syria. Most of those were aimed at targets affiliated with the Khorasan Group.

• **A continued air campaign of similar scope: $200 million to $320 million per month**

  The United States was carrying out about 60 air sorties per day to conduct surveillance over Iraq before it expanded operations into Syria, meaning even more are likely needed now. As time progresses, it’s likely that the amount of airstrikes the U.S.-led coalition carries out will dwindle, but the aerial intelligence gathering will continue. There are currently about 1,600 U.S. service members deployed in Iraq as part of the mission, which will likely grow to about 2,000 personnel once the 1st Infantry Division headquarters arrives in Baghdad and Irbil, the city in Iraq’s Kurdish region where the United States has a large presence.

• **A larger air campaign: $350 million to $570 million per month**

  This assumes two things: the United States bumping up its campaign to about 120 surveillance flights and 150 airstrikes monthly, while expanding its presence on the ground to about 5,000 service members.

• **“Boots on the ground”: $1.1 billion to $1.8 billion per month**

  This scenario has been ruled out by President Obama. It assumes an even larger air campaign, with 150 surveillance flights and 200 targets hit monthly in Iraq and Syria. It also assumes 25,000 U.S. service members on the ground in Iraq and Syria, as some have advocated. About 80 percent of the cost with scenario would come from sustaining the ground forces.

1) **Lower-Intensity Air Campaign**

The first scenario assumes the tempo of air operations in steady-state settles to a level of 90 ISR sorties per day and 100 targets attacked per month. In comparison, the United States conducted an average of 60 ISR sorties per day in Iraq before operations expanded into Syria and has struck nearly 200 targets in the past month in both Iraq and Syria. These estimates reflect the likelihood that targets will grow more scarce and elusive over time, requiring sustained levels of airborne ISR coverage but fewer strikes. This scenario also assumes that U.S. ground forces in Iraq increase to 2,000 total personnel from the current level of roughly 1,600 to account for the planned deployment of a U.S. Army division level headquarters to command and control friendly forces. Given these assumptions, the steady-state cost of operations would likely be between $200 and $320 million per month.

2) **Higher-Intensity Air Campaign**

The second scenario assumes a higher steady-state level of air operations, with 120 ISR sorties per day and 150 targets attacked per month. It also assumes the level of U.S. ground forces in Iraq is expanded to 5,000 personnel, well above the level announced thus far. Using these assumptions, the monthly cost of operations would likely be between $350 and $570 million.

3) **Boots on the Ground**

The third scenario assumes an even higher level of steady-state air operations, with 150 ISR sorties per day and 200 targets attacked per month. More significantly, it assumes 25,000 U.S. ground personnel are deployed to Iraq and Syria, in line with some public recommendations. This force is assumed to consist of several thousand special operations forces at the “tip of the spear,” supported by a combat aviation brigade, two brigade combat teams, and other forces providing logistical and medical support, all based in Iraq and/or Syria. The higher steady-state level of air operations reflects the likelihood that U.S. forces on the ground would receive additional air support. Using these assumptions, the total monthly cost of air and ground operations would likely be between $1.1 and $1.8 billion, with roughly 80 percent of the cost coming from the sizeable ground component involved.

The cost of operations against ISIL could vary from $200 million to $1.8 billion per month depending on the level of air and ground operations involved, or $2.4 billion to $22 billion on an annualized basis. In comparison, annual spending peaked at $164 billion in Iraq in FY 2008 and $122 billion in Afghanistan in FY 2011 (in FY 2015 dollars). In its most recent budget request, the Pentagon projects it will spend $54 billion for Afghanistan in FY 2015, although much of this funding is likely not due to operations in Afghanistan.

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**Table 1: Summary of Estimated Steady-State Costs Under Three Scenarios**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Monthly Cost</th>
<th>Annualized Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower-Intensity Air Campaign</td>
<td>$200M - $320M</td>
<td>$2.4B - $3.8B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher-Intensity Air Campaign</td>
<td>$350M - $570M</td>
<td>$4.2B - $6.8B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boots on the Ground</td>
<td>$1.1B - $1.8B</td>
<td>$13B - $22B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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CBSA Costs of the Air Fight 29.9.14

Iraq’s Population and Ethnic and Sectarian Divisions
Iraq: The “Poor” Oil State with Terrible Income Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>CIA GDP Estimate, PPP</th>
<th>World Bank GDP Estimate, PPP</th>
<th>IMF GDP Estimate, PPP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>1,494</td>
<td>2,251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>7,100</td>
<td>6,625</td>
<td>7,209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>13,200</td>
<td>7,228</td>
<td>12,444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>30,900</td>
<td>25,136</td>
<td>30,464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oman</td>
<td>29,200</td>
<td>23,570</td>
<td>28,843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UAE</td>
<td>29,600</td>
<td>41,692</td>
<td>29,176</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bahrain</td>
<td>29,100</td>
<td>23,040</td>
<td>33,136</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kuwait</td>
<td>41,800</td>
<td>56,374</td>
<td>39,877</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qatar</td>
<td>100,900</td>
<td>93,825</td>
<td>100,888</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
World Bank Governance Ratings

Aggregate Indicator: Government Effectiveness

Aggregate Indicator: Control of Corruption

Aggregate Indicator: Political Stability and Absence of Violence

Aggregate Indicator: Rule of Law
Iraq: UN Estimates Human Development Far Worse than Syria

Table B: Iraq’s HDI indicators for 2012 relative to selected countries and groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HDI value</th>
<th>HDI rank</th>
<th>Life expectancy at birth</th>
<th>Expected years of schooling</th>
<th>Mean years of schooling</th>
<th>GNI per capita (PPP US$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>0.590</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>69.6</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>3,557</td>
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<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>0.713</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>73.4</td>
<td>13.6</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
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<td>57</td>
<td>74.1</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>7.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arab States</td>
<td>0.652</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8,317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium HDI</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>69.9</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>5,428</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Iraq: Population Pressure and “Youth Bulge”

Population in 2014: 32.6 million

Age Structure:
- Median age: 21.4 years
- 0-14 years: 36.7% (male 6,093,069/female 5,878,590)
- 15-24 years: 19.6% (male 3,237,212/female 3,142,202)

Labor Force: 8.9 million
Dependency Ratio = 76.2%
New entrants to the labor force each year
- Men = 332,000
- Women = 322,000
Iraq Population Density

Source: "Iraq: Country Profile," Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) map found in "Iraq: Population Density," Map Collection, Perry-Castañeda Library (PCL) at the University of Texas at Austin Jan. 2003
CNN Iraq Sectarian and Ethnic Map

Syria’s Population and Ethnic and Sectarian Divisions
Syria Sectarian and Ethnic Map