

# Iraq Situation Report: January 20 - 25, 2016

**1 Airstrike targets ISIS oil collection capabilities.** A security source stated that international coalition conducted airstrikes targeting nine oil tankers inside the Qayyarah Oil Refinery south of Mosul on January 20.  

**2 ISIS continues to remain active near Samarra.** Samarra Operations Command (SOC), Iraqi Army (IA) Aviation, and Popular Mobilization targeted ISIS in al-Lein and Jazeerat Samarra areas, west of Samarra, and in Mkahshifah, north of Samarra between January 20-24. An IA Aviation airstrike destroyed one Vehicle-borne Improvised Explosive Device (VBIED) in Jazeerat Samarra on January 20.   

**3 Security forces conduct clearing operations near Haditha.** Security forces shelled ISIS targets near Baghdadi sub-district, south of Haditha, on January 21, while security forces conducted operations against ISIS headquarters in Wadi Houran area, west of Haditha, on January 25.  

**4 ISIS targets ISF west of Ramadi.** Federal Police (FP) under Jazeera and Badia Operations Command (JBOC) received more than 39 civilian families between January 20-23 fleeing from Hit district, west of Ramadi, and evacuated them to al-Wifa sub-district, west of Ramadi. A SVBIED also targeted a police headquarters on January 23 in either 70 Kilo or 160 Kilo Area, west of Ramadi, injuring seven Anbar local police members, and Federal Police destroyed another VBIED in the same area on January 24.   

**5 ISF continue operations near Ramadi.** Federal Police clashed with ISIS in eastern Husaybah, east of Ramadi, between January 20 and 25, while Anbar Operations Command (AOC), the Counter-Terrorism Service (CTS), Anbar police, tribal fighters, and the 8th IA Division continued clearing operations in Albu Ghanim, al-Sijariyah, al-Sufiyah, and Juwaibah areas, east of Ramadi.    

**6 Hawza militia reportedly locates ISIS cell in Karbala.** Liwa Ali Akbar, a militia associated with the Shi'a religious establishment (Hawza), reportedly arrested ISIS fighters on January 20 in possession of explosives, including four Suicide Vests (SVESTs), in al-Ukhaidir area, southwest of Karbala.  

**7 Hawza militia interdicts ISIS members near key junction.** A militia associated with the Hawza, Firqat al-Abbas al-Qitaliyah, claimed to interdict with tribal fighter support ISIS members attempting to infiltrate Karbala by way of Nukhaib sub-district, southwest of Karbala on January 24.  

**8 ISIS attacks Peshmerga and tribal fighters southeast of Mosul.** ISIS attacked Peshmerga and Arab tribal fighters with variety of weapons and vehicles in Makhmur district, southwest of Arbil, on January 23, but were repelled with support from Coalition airstrikes.    

**9 Shrine attacked in Kirkuk province.** Unidentified attackers set fire to the Imam Hassan shrine on January 24 in Laylan sub-district, southeast of Kirkuk, causing serious damage. The shrine is a religious site for both Shi'a and Sunni pilgrims. 

**10 Gunmen fire at KDP headquarters amid ongoing differences between Kurdish political parties.** A spokesman for the Leadership Council of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) in Sulaimaniyah stated that gunmen in two vehicles opened fire on the KDP Leadership Council headquarters in Sulaimaniyah on January 21. No injuries were reported. 

**11 IDPs return to disputed territory in Diyala.** The Jalula sub-district director stated that 161 internally-displaced person (IDP) families returned to their homes in Jalula, northeast of Muqadiyah on January 21.

**12 Attempted IED attack points to ISIS activity near Iranian border.** A local source stated that police explosives experts defused an IED outside of the home of the director of Mandali sub-district, east of Baquba. 

**13 Minister reportedly escapes assassination attempt in eastern Baghdad.** Fadhila Party member and Youth and Sports Minister Ahmed al-Mousawi stated that unidentified gunmen attempted to assassinate him near his home in eastern Baghdad on January 24 but that he escaped. 



-  Major Cities
-  Coalition
-  ISIS
-  Unknown Gunmen
-  Major Clash
-  SVBIED
-  ISF
-  Anti-ISIS Iraqi Sunni Tribes
-  Airstrikes
-  Failed S/VBIED
-  Peshmerga
-  Iraqi Shi'a Militias

Content: Patrick Martin and ISW Iraq Team  
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The U.S. is actively searching for ways to increase its impact on the anti-ISIS fight in Iraq. U.S. Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter called on Coalition members on January 22 to increase the amount of support they provide, and the U.S. indicated plans to intensify its own assistance for anti-ISIS actors in Iraq. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Joseph Dunford stated that the U.S. was exploring the option to embed U.S. advisers with Iraqi units at bases and outposts in northern Iraq for a future operation to recapture Mosul. Operation Inherent Resolve Spokesperson Col. Steve Warren stated that the new advisers would total "hundreds" at most to advise and assist Peshmerga and Iraqi Security Forces in recapturing Mosul. Meanwhile, U.S. Ambassador Stuart Jones discussed the possibility of increasing Coalition airstrikes with the Iraqi Ministry of Defense while offering adviser support for the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) to assist with the KRG's ongoing financial crisis. Intensified anti-ISIS efforts are necessary to destroy ISIS safe havens and regain territory in Iraq. Increased U.S. support for the ISF and Kurdish partners is also essential to help Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi resist pressure from Iranian proxies who seek to reduce the Coalition's role in the anti-ISIS fight. Now is an opportune time for the U.S. to bolster support for the Iraqi government, as many Iranian proxy militias have shifted a large number of their fighters from Iraq to Syria and have diminished capabilities in Iraq as a result.