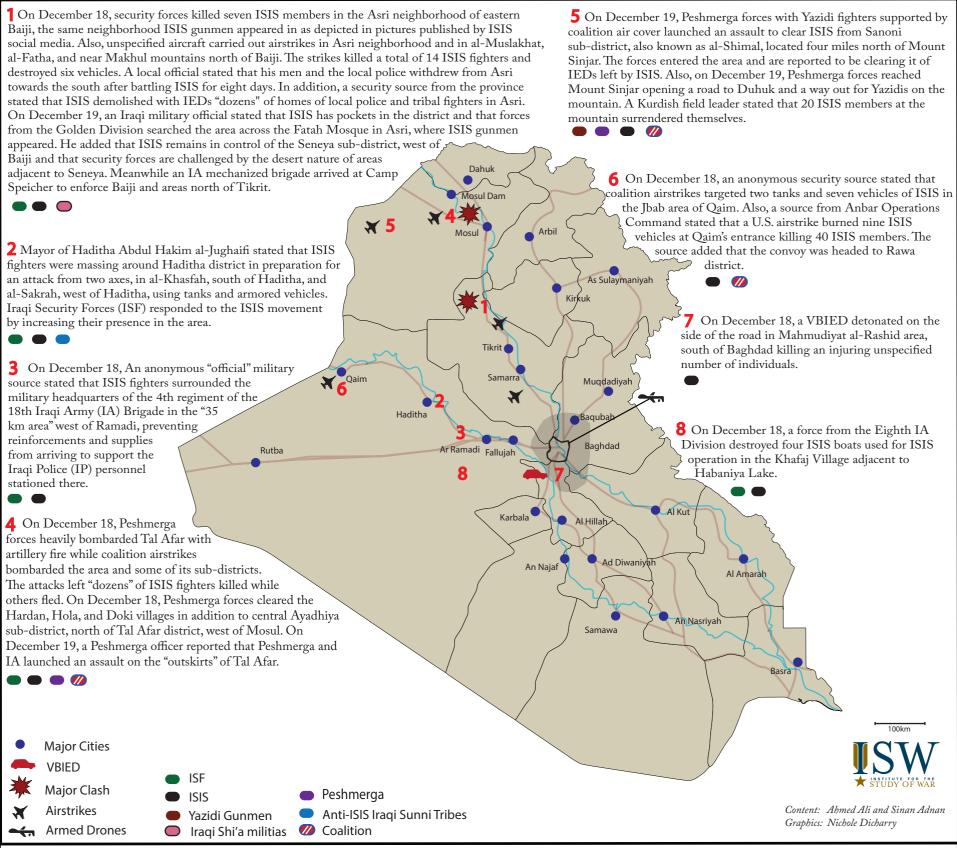
Iraq Situation Report: December 17-19, 2014



Iraqi Kurdish Peshmerga and Iraqi Yazidi fighters continue to launch operations in northern Iraq. Their effort is focused on the areas near Sinjar Mountain which has been besieged by the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) since August of this year. Reportedly, the Peshmerga and Yazidi fighters have been able to break the siege and allow the stranded Yazidi civilians passage to safety. There are also reports of further cooperation between the Peshmerga and Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) likely from the Counter-terrorism Services (CTS) Golden Division, indicating the possibility of future cooperation between the two forces in other areas of northern Iraq. Tal Afar's operations are also at an early stage which indicates Peshmerga and ISF desire to increase pressure on ISIS in the area. Meanwhile, Baiji's conditions continue to evolve as ISIS has regained control of neighborhoods in the center of Baiji. It will be important to watch if these developments will result in repositioning of forces from northern Baghdad or Samarra to defend Baiji.