1. **Iraq Situation Report: January 7 - 11, 2016**

Rival Shi’a political factions are capitalizing on increased instability in Basra to compete for influence. The forward-deployment of Basra-based Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) to fight ISIS has led to a sharp increase in crime and violence between rival tribes in the province. Iraqi Shi’a militias, criminal gangs, and tribal fighters proliferated in Basra while calling for the Popular Mobilization to secure the province. Deployment of the Popular Mobilization would allow Iranian proxy militias to vastly extend their control of the resource-rich province and competing armed groups to expand operations, which would almost certainly lead to violence between different militias. All Shi’a political groups view Basra as a priority area to secure access to both patronage and recruits for the various militias. Shi’a political groups could deploy an increased number of militias in the provinces instead of deploying forward. Turkish troops continue to operate at a training camp northeast of Mosul, ignoring orders from Baghdad to withdraw. Shi’a political forces and Iranian proxy militias also continued to condemn U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF) raids in Kirkuk province as a violation of Iraqi sovereignty, though the U.S. has denied that any such raids have occurred. The constant anti-intervention rhetoric from pro-Iranian actors opposed to the U.S.-led Coalition’s role in Iraq limits Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi’s freedom to accept increased support from the U.S. in the fight against ISIS.

2. **ISIS executes former security forces members.** An anonymous source stated that ISIS executed 80 former security forces members on January 9 in Camp Ghazalani in southern Mosul on charges of spying. ISIS also executed eight former security forces members in Mosul on January 11.

3. **Indicators of a possible reconciliation within Kurdistan Regional Government.** A senior Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) member stated on January 11 that an agreement had been reached whereby the majority Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) allowed the Speaker of Parliament from the rival Gorran party to return to Arbil in a temporary capacity to resume work until a permanent agreement is reached.

4. **Heavy clashes continue near Haditha.** ISIS attacked Barwana sub-district to the south on January 7. ISIS also targeted the ISF in Barwana with up to five Vehicle-borne IEDs (VBIEDs) on January 8, but the ISF destroyed the VBIEDs. The JOC stated that an airstrike wounded ISIS spokesperson Abu Muhammad Al-Adnani on January 7 and killed a top ISIS commander on January 8 in Barwana. IA Aviation airstrikes repelled an attack on Barwana using an unspecified number of VBIEDs on January 9, and the ISF and tribal fighters captured Barwana and al-Sha’i areas on January 11.

5. **ISIS targets IA headquarters near Ramadi.** A suicide VBIED (SVEST) targeted the headquarters of the 41st Brigade, 10th IA Division on January 7 in Albu Aisha northeast of Ramadi, but security forces killed the driver and safely detonated the car.

6. **ISF begins clearing Ramadi’s eastern suburbs.** The ISF cleared central Ramadi’s northern and eastern neighborhoods on January 7. The Counter-Terrorism Service (CTS) declared that Ramadi was “fully recaptured” on January 9 and began advancing into al-Sufiyah and al-Sijariyah, east of Ramadi.

7. **Shi’a political groups compete over Basra security.** CoR Security and Defense Committee Chairman and senior Sadrist Trend member Hakim al-Zamili called security in Basra “unbearable” and accused Basra security leaders of incompetence and corruption. The Badr Organization-affiliated Basra police chief stated that security in Basra had not deteriorated and blamed foreign intervention and politicians trying to garner support for elections for exaggerating. Asa’ib Ahl al-Haq (AAH) leader Qais al-Khazali met with the Basra governor and called on the province’s leaders to allow the Popular Mobilization to work under the Basra Operations Command to secure the province.

8. **U.S. denies ongoing raids near Hawija.** CoR Speaker Salim al-Jubouri stated on January 8 that raids similar to the joint U.S.-Kurdish raid in October 2015 on Hawija occurred “from time to time” and are “supported by Iraqi forces.” He did not state anything regarding a U.S. role in such operations. However, U.S. Ambassador Stuart Jones denied on January 9 that any such raids occur in Hawija and Kirkuk and stated that reports claiming otherwise are untrue.


10. **IDPs return to disputed territory.** The Kanaqin mayor stated that 500 internally-displaced families returned to Jalula sub-district northeast of Muqaddiyah on January 7. Hassan stated that this was “the fifth stage” as they aim to bring back all IDPs in following stages.

11. **ISIS launches deadly attack in Diyala province.** An ISIS attacker detonated a VBIED and then a Suicide Vest (SVEST) at a restaurant in Muqaddiyah, northeast of Baqubah, on January 11, killing 20 people and wounding 40 others. ISIS claimed that the attack targeted the Popular Mobilization.

12. **ISIL launches explosive attack on Baghdad mall.** Four ISIL gunmen attacked a Apparel Mall in Baghdad al-Jadidah in southeastern Baghdad on January 11 using one SVEST and two SVBIEDs before firing on civilians and taking hostages. At least 30 civilians, security forces, and ISIS members were killed and wounded. Baghdad Operations Command secured the mall and allegedly freed most of the hostages while securing other malls nearby as a precautionary measure. A VBIED also exploded in Nahrawan area, east of Baghdad, wounding at least seven people.

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