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1 UN halts aid operations in eastern Mosul as security concerns rise. The UN stated on February 15 that it is “temporarily pausing” aid operations to eastern Mosul as ISIS attacks “continue to inflict heavy civilian casualties there.” Lise Grande, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, reported that UN agencies “made the decision that until security improves, it will be difficult for us to provide assistance.”

13 Popular Mobilization faces major ISIS counterattack southwest of Tel Afar. ISIS launched a major counteroffensive against the Popular Mobilization around Tel Abtah, southwest of Tel Afar, from February 12 to 14 on two axes, one from Tel Afar and the second from Baaj, in order to open up the road between Mosul and Raqqa, Syria. Militias, including Iranian proxies, repelled the attack but suffered significant casualties. The Iraqi Army Aviation (IAA) conducted airstrikes in support.

12 VBIED detonates north of Tikrit after security forces fail to disarm it. A security source stated that a VBIED detonated on February 11 when a bomb squad tried to dismantle it in Qadisiyah, north of Tikrit, killing a member of the squad.

11 ISF thwarts additional attacks in Sadr City and near Baghdad airport. Baghdad Operations Command stated that emergency regiments killed one and arrested two other attackers wearing SVESTs in Radwanya, southwest Baghdad near the airport, on February 16. Security forces also dismantled a VBIED in Sadr City, northeastern Baghdad, on the same day.

10 ISIS claims SVBIED near Sadr City in northeast Baghdad. ISIS claimed a Suicide Vehicle Borne-IED (SVBIED) attack on February 15 that killed seven people and wounded twenty others near a car market in Wahan Square in Habaibiya near Sadr City, northeastern Baghdad.

9 ISIS claims VBIED attacks in southwestern Baghdad. ISIS claimed a Vehicle-Borne IED (VBIED) that detonated in al-Bayaa, southwestern Baghdad, on February 14, causing a “number” of casualties. ISIS also claimed responsibility for a VBIED that detonated near a large car market in the same neighborhood on February 16. According to the Baghdad Operations Command, casualties stood at 51 people killed and 49 injured at time of publication.

8 Sadrists hold “million man” funeral march to honor those killed in February 11 protest. Thousands gathered in Tahrir Square on February 14 for a “million-man” march organized by the Coordinating Committee for Sadrist Demonstrations as a symbolic funeral three days after demonstrators were killed during the Sadrist protest in Baghdad on February 11.

2 Spectacular attacks continue in recaptured Mosul neighborhoods. Two attackers wearing Suicide Vests (SVESTs) detonated in Zahra neighborhood, northeastern Mosul, on February 13, killing 12 civilians and injuring 33 others. ISIS has not yet claimed responsibility.

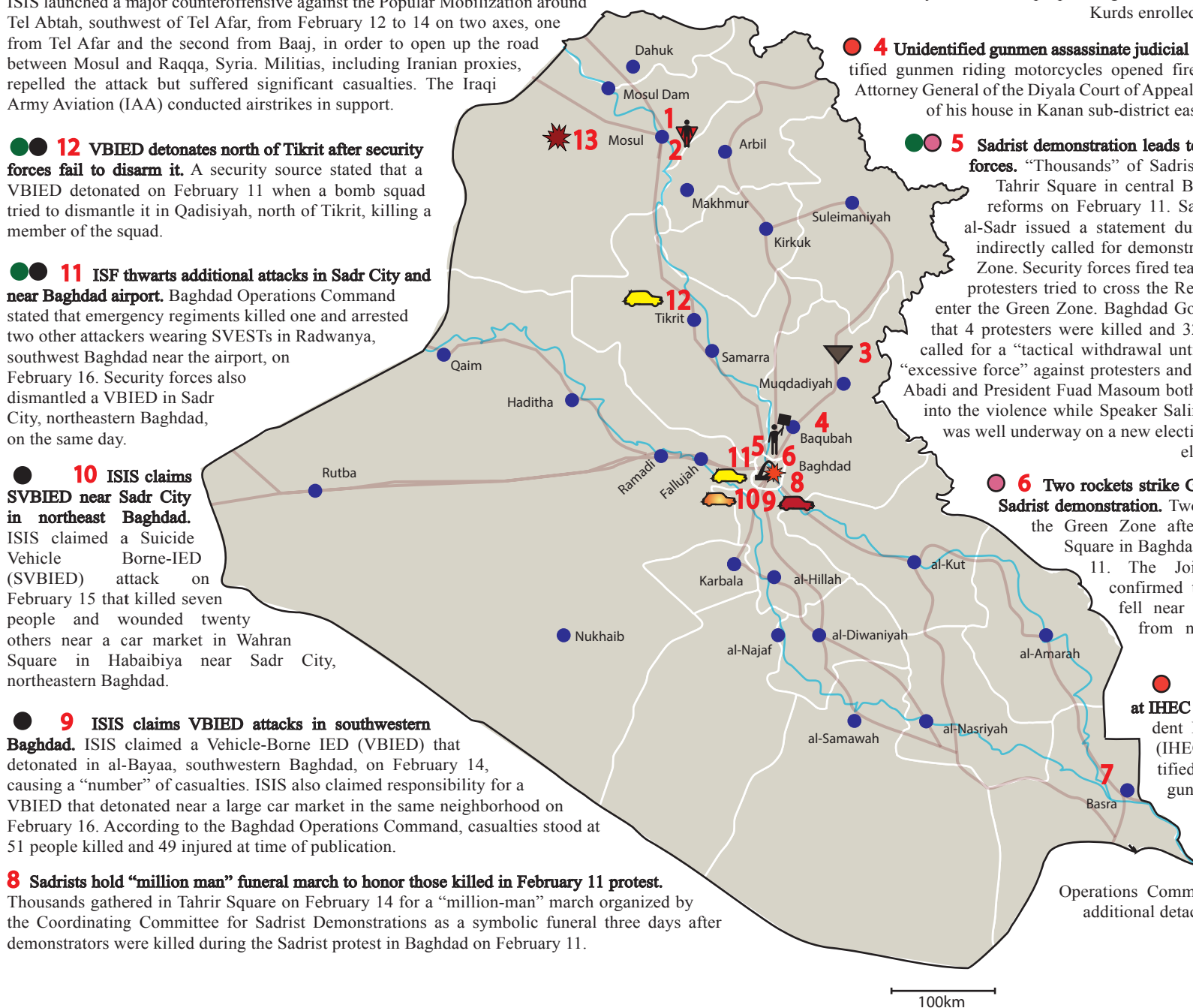
3 IED kills Kurdish PMU fighters in northern Diyala. Security sources stated that an IED killed six Kurdish Popular Mobilization (PMU) members and wounded one other in a convoy near Khanaqin in northern Diyala on February 11. A member of the Kurdish PMU stated that ISIS ambushed their convoy with rocket-propelled grenades. There are unofficially 1,200 Kurds enrolled in the PMU near Khanaqin.

4 Unidentified gunmen assassinate judicial employee in Diyala. Unidentified gunmen riding motorcycles opened fire on and killed the Deputy Attorney General of the Diyala Court of Appeals, Hadi al-Karkhi, at the door of his house in Kanan sub-district east of Baquba on February 13.

5 Sadrist demonstration leads to violent clash with security forces. “Thousands” of Sadrist demonstrators gathered in Tahrir Square in central Baghdad to demand electoral reforms on February 11. Sadrist Trend leader Muqtada al-Sadr issued a statement during the demonstration that indirectly called for demonstrators to approach the Green Zone. Security forces fired tear gas and live ammunition as protesters tried to cross the Republic and Sinak Bridges to enter the Green Zone. Baghdad Governor Ali al-Tamimi stated that 4 protesters were killed and 320 injured. Soon after, Sadr called for a “tactical withdrawal until further notice” due to the “excessive force” against protesters and held PM Abadi responsible. Abadi and President Fuad Masoum both ordered a full investigation into the violence while Speaker Salim al-Juburi stated that work was well underway on a new election law in time for provincial elections, likely in April 2018.

6 Two rockets strike Green Zone amid violence at Sadrist demonstration. Two Katyusha rockets fell near the Green Zone after demonstrations in Tahrir Square in Baghdad turned violent on February 11. The Joint Operations Command confirmed that a “number” of rockets fell near the Green Zone, launched from near Baladiyat and Filistin Street in eastern Baghdad.

7 Unidentified gunmen fire at IHEC office in Basra. An Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) source stated that unidentified gunmen directed “heavy gunfire” on the IHEC office in al-Tuwaisa area of Basra and burned a car parked near it, causing no casualties, on February 12. Basra Operations Command stated that it had sent additional detachments to protect the office.



- Major Cities
- Coalition
- Iraqi Shi'a Militias
- VBIED
- SVBIED
- SVEST
- Demonstration
- Indirect Fire
- Airstrikes
- ISIS
- IED
- Failed S/VBIED

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Baghdad witnessed serious breaches of security from February 11 to 16 due to both escalating protest movements and ISIS attacks. A large Sadrist-led protest, demanding electoral reforms, tried to move from Tahrir Square into the Green Zone on February 11, but security forces repelled the protesters with force, resulting in casualties. Soon after the protesters withdrew, unidentified attackers launched three rockets at the Green Zone from eastern Baghdad, resulting in no casualties. The Sadrist-affiliated militia denied responsibility for the rockets, however the attack may have been the act of Iranian proxy militias which have carried out rocket attacks against U.S. infrastructure before. ISIS, meanwhile, continued carrying out spectacular attacks in the capital, including a bombing on February 16 that killed upwards of fifty people, the deadliest of 2017 so far. Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi called an emergency meeting on February 16 in order to issue procedures to ensure security.

The increased intensity of the Sadrist demonstrations could escalate ongoing intra-Shi'a competition in Baghdad and southern Iraq. Sadrist Trend leader Muqtada al-Sadr retains the momentum to continue mass protests, busing in and mobilizing thousands on February 11, then again on February 14, and calling for another protest on February 17. Sadr had similar momentum in early 2016, when protests spread from Baghdad to the southern provinces. Sadrist protesters are historically undisciplined, however, and in 2016 they attacked political offices in southern Iraq, including Dawa Party and other pro-Iran party headquarters. Similar attacks now as political parties gear up for both provincial and national elections could inflame a greater intra-Shi'a conflict in the southern provinces. Basra will likely be a significant flash point as there have already been attacks related to election violence in the past month. Baghdad will need to move quickly to quell Sadr's protests before they instigate a greater conflict between armed political groups in the capital and southern provinces.