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1 ISF continues slow advance in northern and eastern Mosul. The 16th Iraqi Army (IA) Division cleared four villages northeast of Mosul, connecting the ISF-held terrain in the northern and eastern axes on December 3. Meanwhile, the Counter-Terrorism Service (CTS) continued operations in northern and eastern Mosul and is approaching al-Khosr river, a Tigris tributary river which bisects the northeastern quarter of the city.

8 Denmark pulling air power from Iraq and Syria in mid-December. Danish Foreign Minister Anders Samuelsen stated on December 2 that Denmark will be pulling its seven F-16 fighter jets from Syria and Iraq in "mid-December" as planned, after six months of action. Samuelsen stated that it made no practical or economic sense to extend Denmark's mission.

7 Security forces continue clearing operations east of Shirqat. Units under Salah al-Din Operation Command (SDOC) and the 60th Brigade of the 17th IA Division cleared the villages of Jadidah and al-Nahiya al-Kabira on the eastern bank of the Tigris River, across from Shirqat on December 4.

6 CoR remains divided over key articles of 2017 federal budget. The Council of Representatives (CoR) met on December 4 and 5 to discuss the 2017 federal budget, but several major disagreements prevented it from putting the budget to a final vote. Sunni and Shi'a parties were unable to agree on the proportion of Shi'a and Sunni units within the Popular Mobilization (PMU), and the Kurdish Alliance also disagreed over allocations for the Peshmerga. Additionally, CoR members from southern oil-producing provinces expressed discontent over the way oil revenues are split between the central government and the provinces.

2 Iraqi Army deploys additional forces from Baghdad to Mosul. The ISF deployed the Baghdad-based 43rd Brigade of the 11th IA Division to Mosul on December 1 to reinforce ongoing operations in the eastern neighborhoods.

3 Unidentified gunmen clash with Kurdish security forces in southern Suleimaniyah Province, detonate SVEST. Four unidentified gunmen clashed with Kurdish Asayish members in Bunkala village, south of Suleimaniyah on December 4. Two of the attackers reportedly detonated Suicide Vests (SVESTs) with unspecified results, though the use of SVESTs could not be confirmed. The attack followed an ambush by unidentified gunmen on December 2 against an Asayish force that killed two civilians.

4 Security forces disarm HBIED in northeast Diyala. Diyala police and the 5th Iraqi Army (IA) Division conducted security operations on December 4 in Shuk al-Rim village and the Nahr Imam area, northeast of Muqdadiah, disarming a House-borne Improvised Explosive Device (HBIED) and clearing a number of IEDs.

5 ISIS detonates VBIED in Sadr City. ISIS detonated a Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Device (VBIED) in the area of Kasra and Atash in Sadr City in eastern Baghdad on December 5, killing at least three civilians and wounding an unspecified number of others. ISIS claimed the attacked killed 60 civilians.



Content: Staley Smith, Michael Momayezi, and the ISW Iraq Team
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ISIS spectacular attacks in Baghdad decreased from December 1-5, allowing the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) to deploy security forces from Baghdad to northern Iraq. The decrease is part of a trend over the past few weeks of limited or minor suicide attacks in Iraq's capital. The ISF deployed an Iraqi Army (IA) brigade from Baghdad to eastern Mosul on December 1 to provide support to and operate alongside the Counter Terrorism Service (CTS) in ongoing operations to recapture the city. This deployment follows the movement of the Baghdad-based 60th Brigade from the 17th IA Division to Shirqat on November 29. ISIS may try to exploit the reduced security in Baghdad and attempt further attacks in the city in order to draw ISF units back to Baghdad or prevent additional ISF units from deploying to northern Iraq.

The Council of Representatives (CoR) met to discuss the 2017 federal budget on December 4 and 5 but failed to put the budget to a final vote. One of the primary obstacles to passing the budget was a disagreement between the Shia National Alliance and the Sunni Etihad bloc over the Popular Mobilization Law, which passed on November 26 and institutionalizes and finances the Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) as part of the ISF. The two blocs differed on the proportion of Shi'a and Sunni units currently within the Popular Mobilization that will benefit under the new law, which did not specify which militias qualify for these benefits. The CoR needs to reach an agreement on which forces will receive funding in order to pass the budget, but Sunni parties could try to stall the vote in order to guarantee greater allocations to Sunni tribal fighters. If the structure of the PMU is decided by a clause within the budget and voted on by the CoR, the Shi'a majority within the CoR can solidify Shi'a militias as the majority in the new structure, furthering Sunni alienation from Iraqi Government.