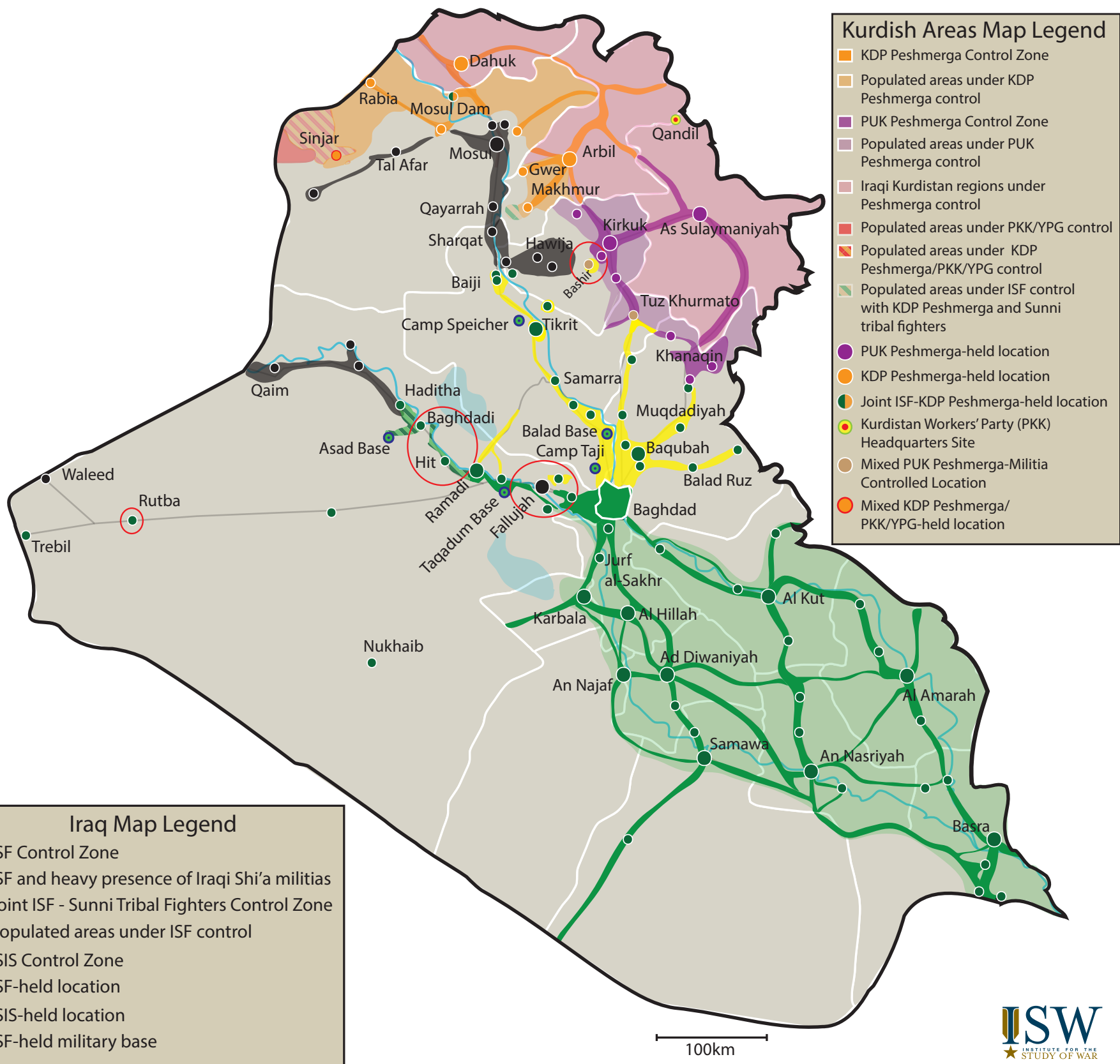


Iraq Control of Terrain Map: May 23, 2016



The ISF has made significant gains in the Euphrates River Valley over the past two months, recapturing almost the entirety of the southern bank. The ISF, backed by tribal fighters and Coalition airstrikes, recaptured Hit District, west of Ramadi, on April 14 before recapturing nearly the entirety of the area between Hit and Baghdadi Sub-district over the subsequent weeks. Some villages, particularly on the northern bank of the river, remain under ISIS control. ISW is changing the status of these areas to Joint ISF-Sunni Tribal Fighter Control Zones.

Joint ISF and Popular Mobilization forces have launched operations to recapture the Fallujah area. Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi announced the effort to recapture Fallujah on May 23 at a meeting with senior ISF officials and proxy militia leaders, including Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis and Badr Organization leader Hadi al-Amiri. The ISF, large numbers of Popular Mobilization fighters, and Iranian proxy militiamen engaged in a concerted push to clear Fallujah's northern environs. The groups cleared Garma Sub-district, a historical safe-haven for Sunni extremist groups and a longtime base for ISIS attacks into the Baghdad area, on May 23. The ISF, backed by Coalition airstrikes and tribal fighters, also recaptured a stretch of highway south of Fallujah between the Habaniya base and Amiriyat al-Fallujah, a town that faces constant pressure from ISIS, on May 7. ISW is thus changing the status of this area to ISF Control Zone.

The ISF also recaptured Rutba, a district that sits along the Jordan-Ramadi highway in western Anbar, on May 10. ISW is thus changing the status of Rutba to ISF-held location. Claims by the Joint Operations Command (JOC) that the ISF fully control the highway between the Trebil border crossing with Jordan and Ramadi could not be confirmed.

A joint Iraqi Shi'a militia, Turkmen, and Peshmerga force recaptured the Shi'a Turkmen village of Bashir, south of Kirkuk, from ISIS on April 30. The operation was a symbolic victory for Iraqi Shi'a militias and Turkmen militias, as Bashir was the site of a massacre of Turkmen in late 2014. However, security arrangements remain tenuous, as the Peshmerga belonging to the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) often have friction and occasionally clash with Iraqi Shi'a militias and Turkmen militias, particularly in the joint-held town of Tuz Khurmato, south of Bashir. Bashir could thus be an additional source of friction between Turkmen and Kurds. ISW is changing the status of Bashir to Joint Peshmerga and Iraqi Shi'a militia Control.

Content: Patrick Martin with Emily Anagnostos and Hannah Werman
Graphics: Patrick Martin

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