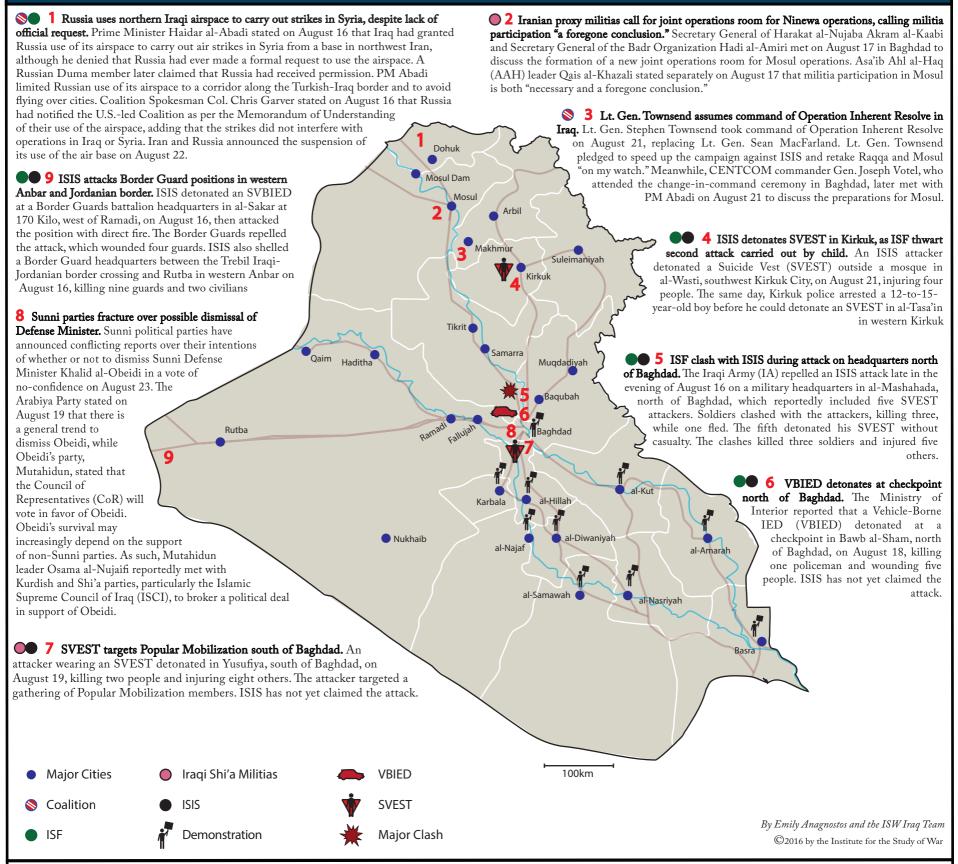


## Iraq Situation Report: August 16-22, 2016



Iraqi Defense Minister Khalid al-Obeidi faces an upcoming vote of no-confidence in the Council of Representatives (CoR) following accusations of corruption from the Reform Front, the opposition bloc driven by former Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki. The possibility of his dismissal has fractured the cohesion of the Sunni political blocs, risking the long-term success of efforts to reconcile and reintegrate Iraqi Sunnis with Baghdad. Obeidi may need to rely on support from non-Sunni blocs in order to survive the vote, currently scheduled for August 23. Osama al-Nujaifi - the leader of the Mutahidun Bloc that includes Obeidi - has reportedly met with Kurdish and Iraqi Shi'a parties, particularly the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI), in order to broker a political deal to support the embattled minister. It remains unclear if the Reform Front's effort to remove Obeidi has the support of the 165 CoR members required to dismiss a minister. This political crisis nonetheless comes at an inopportune time as the Coalition and the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) set conditions to retake Mosul. Lt. Gen. Stephen Townsend assumed command of Operation Inherent Resolve on August 21 and vowed to retake Mosul during his one-year term. The successful removal of Obeidi and the likely follow-up changes to senior leadership in the ISF would complicate this timeframe.