

1 ISF advance into central Mosul, cut Tel Afar GLOC. The Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) retook the government center in western Mosul on March 12 and continued operations into the city center. The ISF meanwhile recaptured the town of Badush, northwest of the city, on March 15, severing the GLOC between Tel Afar and West Mosul. ISIS is using chemical weapons to defend western Mosul, according to the UN.

12 KDP-backed Rojava Peshmerga clash with PKK-linked Yazidi militia near Sinjar. Rojava Peshmerga, a Syrian Kurdish unit trained and backed by the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), deployed to a KDP frontline with the Sinjar Resistance Units (YBS), a Yazidi militia linked to the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), north of Sinjar on March 2. The Rojava Peshmerga and YBS clashed on March 3 before agreeing to a 24-hour ceasefire and continued negotiations on March 4.

11 ISIS conducts series of suicide attacks in Tikrit Province. ISIS militants detonated three or four Suicide Vests (SVEST) at a wedding party in Hajjaj, north of Tikrit, on March 8, killing 26 people and injuring up to 67 others. An ISIS militant detonated a Suicide Vehicle-Borne IED (SVBIED) at the entrance of al-Atbaa Street in central Tikrit on March 15, killing seven people and injuring 38 others.

10 Two VBIEDs detonate in Hit District. A VBIED detonated in the center of Hit District on March 16. Another VBIED detonated on March 19 in al-Hajiyah, south of Hit District. The attacks caused no casualties.

9 Security forces foil VBIED attack west of Ramadi. The Anbar police and National Security Directorate destroyed a VBIED in a controlled explosion in 36 Kilo, west of Ramadi, on March 3.

8 Unknown gunmen target a police station south of Basra. Three unidentified gunmen attacked the 2nd Emergency Police Battalion headquarters in Zubair District, south of Basra City, on March 10 with a hand grenade, injuring one policeman. Security forces arrested the individuals.

2 KRG president meets with high-level Russian representatives. Kurdistan Regional President Masoud Barzani and senior Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) officials met with a high level Russian delegation including the Russian Ambassador to Iraq, the Deputy Director of Middle East Department at the Russian Defense Ministry, the Russian Consul General in the Kurdistan region, and a senior delegation from Russian natural gas company Gazprom on March 1. Barzani indicated KRG desire to "strengthen and develop bilateral relations with Russia," particularly in agriculture.

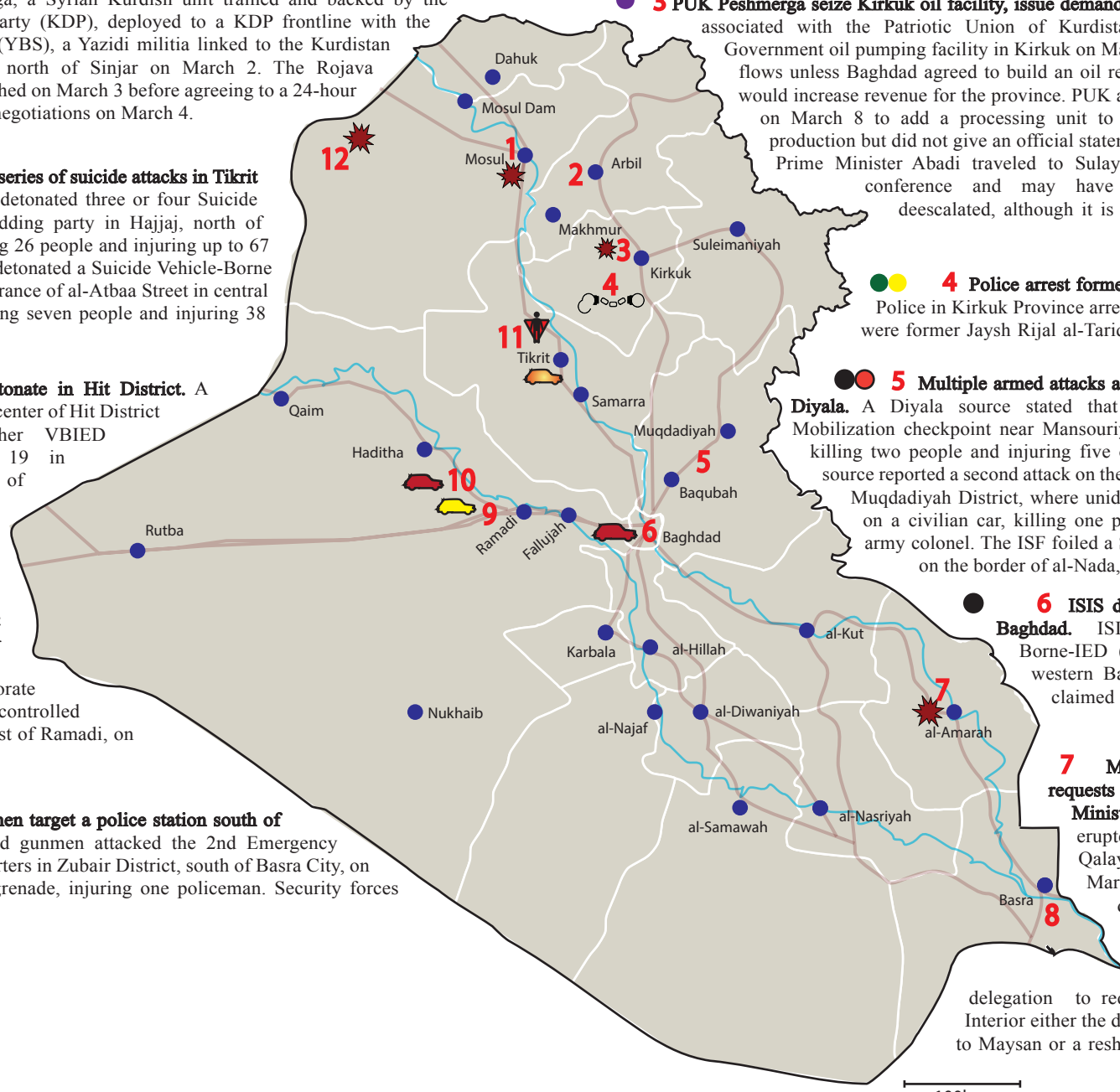
3 PUK Peshmerga seize Kirkuk oil facility, issue demands from Baghdad. Peshmerga associated with the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) seized an Iraqi Government oil pumping facility in Kirkuk on March 2, threatening to halt oil flows unless Baghdad agreed to build an oil refinery in Kirkuk. A refinery would increase revenue for the province. PUK and Baghdad officials agreed on March 8 to add a processing unit to the facility to increase oil production but did not give an official statement about adding a refinery. Prime Minister Abadi traveled to Sulaymaniya on March 7 for a conference and may have mediated. The situation deescalated, although it is unclear if the PUK's forces withdrew from the facility.

4 Police arrest former JRTN members in Kirkuk. Police in Kirkuk Province arrested three ISIS members that were former Jaysh Rijal al-Tariqa al-Naqshabandiya (JRTN) members on March 16.

5 Multiple armed attacks and a foiled SVEST attack in Diyala. A Diyala source stated that ISIS attacked a Popular Mobilization checkpoint near Mansouriya al-Jabal, east of Baquba, killing two people and injuring five others on March 6. Another source reported a second attack on the main road near al-Shakha in Muqdadiah District, where unidentified gunmen opened fire on a civilian car, killing one person and injuring a retired army colonel. The ISF foiled a Suicide Vest (SVEST) attack on the border of al-Nada, east of Baquba, on March 8.

6 ISIS detonates VBIED in western Baghdad. ISIS detonated a Vehicle Borne-IED (VBIED) in Hayy al-Amil, western Baghdad, on March 20. ISIS claimed the attack that left 23 people dead and 45 others injured.

7 Maysan Provincial Council requests military support from Ministry of Interior. Clashes erupted between rival tribes in Qalay al-Salah in Maysan on March 7 after a truce broke down, wounding three civilians. The Maysan Provincial Council reportedly formed a delegation to request from the Ministry of Interior either the deployment of military forces to Maysan or a reshuffle of police leadership in the province.



- Major Cities
- ISF
- JRTN
- ISIS
- VBIED
- ★ Major Clash
- Peshmerga
- Unknown Gunmen
- ▲ SVEST
- SVBIED
- Coalition
- PKK
- Iraqi Shi'a Militias
- Arrest
- Failed S/VBIED

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Regional actors are vying to dominate the post-ISIS security structure and political order in northern Iraq. Turkey and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) are threatening the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK) and its affiliates in Sinjar, west of Mosul City. Sinjar is a historic flashpoint for ethnic tensions and at the center of Turkish, Iranian, and Kurdish interests. The KDP seeks to incorporate Sinjar into the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), expanding the KRG's territorial control. Turkey supports the KDP's desire to move against the PKK and has threatened to participate in a direct attack. The desire to move against Sinjar could bring Turkey and the KDP into conflict with Iran. Iranian-backed elements of the Popular Mobilization are stationed nearby at Tel Afar and have claimed that the PKK-backed Yazidi militia in Sinjar is part of the Popular Mobilization. Iranian-backed militias could intervene on the side of the PKK in Sinjar if Turkey or the KDP escalate further, which could undermine post-ISIS stability in northern Iraq. Russia is also seeking to gain influence in northern Iraq through a financial relationship with the KDP, which could embolden the KDP by granting it greater independence from Baghdad. Russian-owned oil company Rosneft renegotiated a loan with the KRG to pre-finance crude oil exports to Russia on February 21. Kurdistan Regional President Masoud Barzani later met with a senior Russian delegation in Arbil on March 1 to discuss strengthening bilateral relations between the KRG and Russia, marking the first high-level Russian delegation to visit Iraqi Kurdistan. Separately, tribal violence in southern Iraq, particularly in Maysan Province, signals rising intra-Shi'a competition ahead of provincial elections in September 2017.