Executive Summary

- Militant rocket fire strikes close to the Camp Liberty/Baghdad Airport complex, amid ongoing operations in the disputed cities of Anbar and Salahuddin.
- No significant change to frontline positions was recorded over the central provinces this week, with the battle for Ramadi continuing to record among the highest levels of Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and ISIS activity nationwide.
- Sporadic protests continue across Basra, Babil, Dhi Qar, Maysan and Muthanna provincial capitals amid ongoing threat of tribal clashes in remote areas.

National Overview

Militant rocket fire strikes close to the Camp Liberty/Baghdad Airport complex, amid ongoing operations in the disputed cities of Anbar and Salahuddin. Occurring in the late hours of Monday September 21, security officials with the Baghdad Operations Command have now confirmed that a number of rockets landed within the wider Camp Nasr/Liberty facility, causing minor damage to infrastructure and killing two civilians in the adjacent neighborhood of Amiriya. Officials have indicated that the target is likely to have been the Camp Liberty facility, rather than the nearby Baghdad International Airport (BIAP) complex, with security agencies at BIAP also confirming that no rockets struck the Airport compound and no interruption to civil aviation was recorded. The incident is the first major rocket attack within the 5 kilometer area north of BIAP in over six months and is understood to have been fired from the Taji sub-district approximately 13 kilometers north of BIAP by a Katyusha truck rocket launcher. While a significant increase in strikes close to the airport compound are unlikely, given that militant static rocket positions have now largely been removed from the Taji and north-western Abu Ghraib area in line with ISF advances, the potential for sporadic, isolated indirect fire nonetheless remains.

Northern Region

Four month stalemate in Baiji continues despite renewed ISF efforts to drive militants from the city, as Peshmerga conduct major counter-terrorism arrests in the disputed district of Daquq. According to official sources, units allied to the Federal government are now once again in possession of the Muhandisin, Nafit and Kahraba neighborhoods of Baiji city, although these
successes have not occurred without considerable resistance from militants based in the district capital who continue to regularly harry the arrival of fresh reserves entering from both northern and southern axes, particularly the Askri area of south-western Tamim where on September 19 an Iraqi soldier was killed and three others injured in a double VBIED ambush on ISF positions. Such challenges were also borne out for units on the ground close to the nearby oil refinery directly north-west of the city this week, which at the time of writing remains contested once more between government and rebel fighters. In the Kurdistan region, further air strikes and surveillance operations by Turkish fighters jets were also recorded over the past seven days, resulting in Turkish estimates of some 55 fatalities among Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) militants in the Zakhu. As before however, Turkish military activity remains confined to the northern border district of Zakhu, Dohuk province, amid a continuation of stable operating conditions in Erbil and Sulaimaniyah.

Central Region

No significant change to frontline positions was recorded over the central provinces this week, with the battle for Ramadi continuing to record among the highest levels of ISF and ISIS activity nationwide. With Iraqi security forces now essentially blockading militant strongholds in the city from Humeyrah and Tash in the south, armed fighters are understood to be increasingly resorting to the use of indirect fire (IDF), namely mortar and rocket projectiles to stall further advances. Areas of high volatility this week included the Albu Aytha area north of the Euphrates, along with Khaldiya 15 kilometers east of the city, both of which have suffered heavy bombardment by ISIS mortar teams in recent days. Beyond the single rocket incident recorded west of Mansour district on Monday, the main security development to occur in Baghdad this week was the return of sectarian and anti-ISF car bombings in central areas after over two weeks of interruption by ISIS networks. The deadliest blast took place in the predominantly Shia neighborhood of Ameen in New Baghdad, delivered in the form of a stationary VBIED, detonated within a busy vegetable market. The attack is understood to have been linked to a similar bombing at a public market in Harjaj four days earlier, with attackers in both cases likely to have specifically targeted non-Sunni populations in a bid to stir sectarian unrest and recrimination attacks within the capital.

Southern Region

Sporadic protests continue across Basra, Babil, Dhi Qar, Maysan and Muthanna provincial capitals amid ongoing threat of tribal clashes in remote areas.
As before, urban demonstrations remain driven by a mixture of concerns over political corruption and employment related issues, the largest of which took place in northern Babil this week when around 3,000 residents gathered in Hilla city, demanding improved government services and a commitment to tackle corruption within the provincial administration. While the intensity of such protests remains considerably below that recorded during the summer heatwave of late July and August, the potential for further interruptions to traffic and even direct impediments to operations caused as a consequence of popular agitation remains in place and is set to continue for the foreseeable future. Although only accounting for a small minority of all unrest, evidence of further protests and wage demands by oil field workers was also recorded on September 15 in the Qurna area, as Iraqi nationals took to the streets of Gulf Square in Qurna to demand pay increases, later dispersing peacefully. Operations teams are also advised to take particular caution while traveling across rural areas of Faw and Abu Khasaib in southern Basra at present, following the outbreak of tribal hostilities since September 18.
Key Security Events
September 15 - 21, 2015

DOHUK, SEPTEMBER 19:
At least 55 Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) fighters were killed in a series of Turkish air strikes on the Zakhu sub-district of Dohuk governorate. The incident took place on the mountainous border with Turkey, principally targeting PKK training camps.

SALAHUDDIN, SEPTEMBER 16:
Iraqi security forces regained control of the Muhandisin, Nafit and Kahraba neighborhoods of Baiji city as part of wider operations conducted in coordination with the Iraqi Air Force.

ANBAR, SEPTEMBER 21:
ISF units repelled a major ISIS attack on the Al Sedequiya area of Ramadi province, reportedly killing at least five militant fighters in the course of the battle.

BAGHDAD, SEPTEMBER 21:
Militants fired a series of rockets at the Camp Liberty complex and Amiriya neighborhood of western Baghdad city, resulting in the death of two civilians and minor material damages. No disruption to commercial aviation or direct hits on Baghdad airport were identified.

BASRA, SEPTEMBER 16:
Armed conflict broke out between rival groups of the Bani Saad tribe close to the Uzz River in northern Basra, leading to the death of two civilians and the injury of a number of others. ISF were subsequently deployed to suppress the fighting.

LEGEND

- KRG Territory
- ISIS Held City
- Kurdish Held City
- Disputed City
- ISF Held City
- Peshmerga Controlled Areas
Politics and Security

- **Rockets Strike Baghdad Airport Area – Al Arabiya.** Rockets fired by militants struck the area of Baghdad’s vast airport complex on Monday, security officials said. “A number of Katyusha rockets landed near Camp Al-Nasr (Victory), west of Baghdad,” the security command responsible for Baghdad said in a statement, referring to a base close to the airport. The rockets were launched from the Taji area, north of the capital, it said. A police colonel said 13 rockets struck two areas near the airport, but an official at the facility said none had hit the airport itself. There were no immediate reports of casualties from the rocket fire. [Full Article]

- **Iraq Political Disarray Slows Ramadi Campaign – USA Today.** Political disarray in Iraq appears to be undermining a critical offensive to retake Ramadi, a key city in Iraq’s Sunni heartland seized by Islamic State militants nearly four months ago. Iraq’s government is relying on a patchwork of militias and government forces, some with competing loyalties, to conduct military operations, making it nearly impossible to achieve a unified effort, analysts and Iraqi officials said. “The underlying problem is the Iraqis have a sort of smorgasbord approach to military operations,” said James Jeffrey, former US ambassador to Iraq. The political rivalries could also undermine broader efforts to retake other territory from the ISIS, particularly Mosul, Iraq’s second largest city. [Full Article]

- **Turkish Jets Hit Kurdish Militant Camps in Iraq, at Least 55 Killed – Reuters.** At least 55 militants were killed when Turkish warplanes hit Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) camps in northern Iraq overnight, security sources said on Saturday, as Ankara shows no sign of easing up strikes on insurgents ahead of a Nov. 1 election. The jets took off from a base in Diyarbakir, in Turkey’s southeast, and later returned without damage, the sources said. Turkey’s largely Kurdish southeast has been hit by almost daily waves of deadly fighting between PKK militants and security forces since the collapse of a ceasefire in July. Security forces have responded by launching frequent bombing raids into mountainous northern Iraq where the PKK has camps. [Full Article]

Separate Bombings Kill 16, Wound 58 in Iraq

Security officials in Iraq say more than a dozen people have lost their lives and over 50 others sustained injuries in separate bomb attacks across the conflict-ridden country. A police source, speaking on condition of anonymity, said 12 people were killed and 42 injured when a car rigged with explosives was detonated in the al-Amin al-Thaniyah neighborhood of eastern Baghdad on Monday. Security forces immediately cordoned off the site of the attack, and ambulance workers ferried the wounded to a nearby hospital.

Daesh (ISIS) claimed responsibility for the attack in a statement. Additionally, two civilians lost their lives and five others suffered injuries when an improvised explosive device was set off near a popular market in the town of Yusufiyah, situated 40 kilometers (24 miles) south of Baghdad. Elsewhere in Iraq’s eastern province of Diyala, a bomb went off near a restaurant in the town of Balad Ruz, located some 65 kilometers (40 miles) northeast of the capital, leaving two people dead and eight others injured. Also on Monday, a bomb was detonated near an army patrol in the town of Taji, located 30 kilometers (20 miles) north of Baghdad.

Source: Albawaba [Full Article]

Economics and Business

- **Stalled Oil Field Project Adds to Iraq’s Woes** – WSJ. A stalled project aimed at sustaining Iraq’s record oil production has become a symbol of missed opportunities for a country reeling from the fall in crude prices and the war against Islamic State. The government has ramped up production to meet its large payroll and fund the battle against the Sunni Muslim extremist group which now controls large parts of the country. Iraq had hoped to expand output beyond its current level of more than 4 million barrels a day by injecting seawater from the Persian Gulf into its southern oil fields to extract the remaining resources. But now, the project isn’t expected to be completed until 2020 at the earliest – seven years behind schedule. [Full Article]

- **Iraq Tries to Contain Cholera Outbreak West of Baghdad** – Reuters. On Saturday Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi ordered daily water tests and other measures to contain an outbreak of cholera that has killed at least six people in Baghdad’s western outskirts. The deaths were in the town of Abu Ghraib, about 25 kilometers (15 miles) west of the capital, hospital sources said. At least 70 other cases were diagnosed in the area. Around 300 people were diagnosed with the illness in 2012 in the northern city of Kirkuk and the Kurdistan region. Five years earlier, at least 24 people died and more than 4,000 cases were confirmed. The country’s water and sewerage systems are outdated and infrastructure development has been hindered by years of war and neglect. [Full Article]

Kurds Lose Fight to Sell Crude in US After Iraq Sues

Iraq’s self-governing Kurds can’t sell Iraqi crude oil in the US under a court decision that puts a fresh hurdle in the path of Kurdish efforts to achieve financial independence from the central government in Baghdad. The US Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit in New Orleans dismissed an attempt by the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) to overturn a judge’s earlier decision against its planned sale of oil to an unidentified buyer in the US. The KRG’s eventual sale of the disputed cargo in Israel made the appeal moot, the court said in a ruling.

The case began last year when Iraq’s central government sued to seize a tanker loaded with crude from the country’s Kurdish region that had sailed to the Gulf of Mexico and anchored 60 miles (97 kilometers) off the coast of Texas. The appeals court upheld an order by a judge in Houston requiring the KRG to notify him before trying in the future to sell any oil in the US. “The KRG mooted this appeal through its voluntary decision to discharge the cargo in Israel,” the court said Monday in its 13-page ruling. “In so doing, the KRG severely weakened its argument.” [Source: Bloomberg Full Article]

Key Upcoming Dates

| Sept. 23 - 26 | Eid al Adha (Feast of the Sacrifice) National Holiday |
About Triple Canopy

Triple Canopy is a leading provider of mission support, security, training and advisory services to government agencies and multinational corporations across a range of market sectors and geographies. The company excels at delivering complete program management solutions to help clients achieve critical mission objectives in challenging locations worldwide. From logistics and life support to personal protection and training, clients rely on Triple Canopy to mitigate risk and ensure business continuity. Triple Canopy is ISO 9001:2008 certified and a founding signatory of the International Code of Conduct.