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Insider's View Bulletin: Inside Mosul update: Weekly analysis of violence Oct. 8 – Oct. 14

Oct. 19, 2016

Key points:

- IS perpetrated executions in Mosul spike over past three weeks
- Frequency of attacks on IS by local insurgents also on the upswing
- Though lethality of those attacks still relatively static
- Preliminary analysis of data from the week covering Oct. 15 – Oct. 21 suggests a spike in IS perpetrated executions, and guerilla violence targeting IS

Impact: An analysis of violence in Mosul – including both violence perpetrated by, and against IS – shows an uptick over the past three weeks. As noted in BULLETINS, "Data analysis of violence in and around Mosul," from Oct. 13 and Sept. 9 (which track monthly trends in violence) upticks in violence in discreet urban areas – particularly upticks in IS perpetrated executions – have consistently presaged IS losing that territory.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: This BULLETIN analyzes weekly trends in violence inside Mosul city. This includes violence perpetrated by IS – primarily executions of civilians, and less frequently, its own fighters – and violence perpetrated against IS by indigenous insurgents.

Data is collected by in house staff through interviews with a range of sources, including: IS militants, anti-IS insurgents, Iraqi security forces, KRG security forces, and a range of local residents.

Our data collection methodology does not allow us to comprehensively capture all violence in Mosul. However, our methodology is static over time, and we believe the trends we are capturing in our weekly analysis are broadly accurate, and therefore provide meaningful insight into fluctuating levels of violence inside Mosul.

For analysis of longer-term monthly trends in violence in Mosul, see BULLETINS, "*Data analysis of violence in and around Mosul,*" from Oct. 13 and Sept. 9.

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IS perpetrated violence: This chart presents a week-by-week account of IS perpetrated executions inside Mosul over the past eight weeks. It tracks both executions of civilians (a designation that includes suspected anti-IS insurgents) and of IS militants.



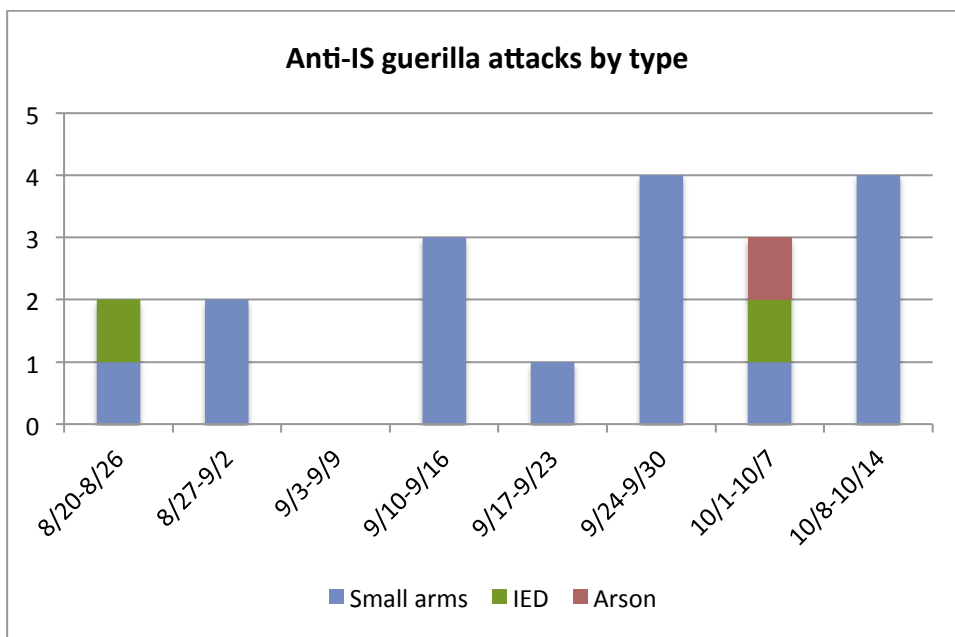
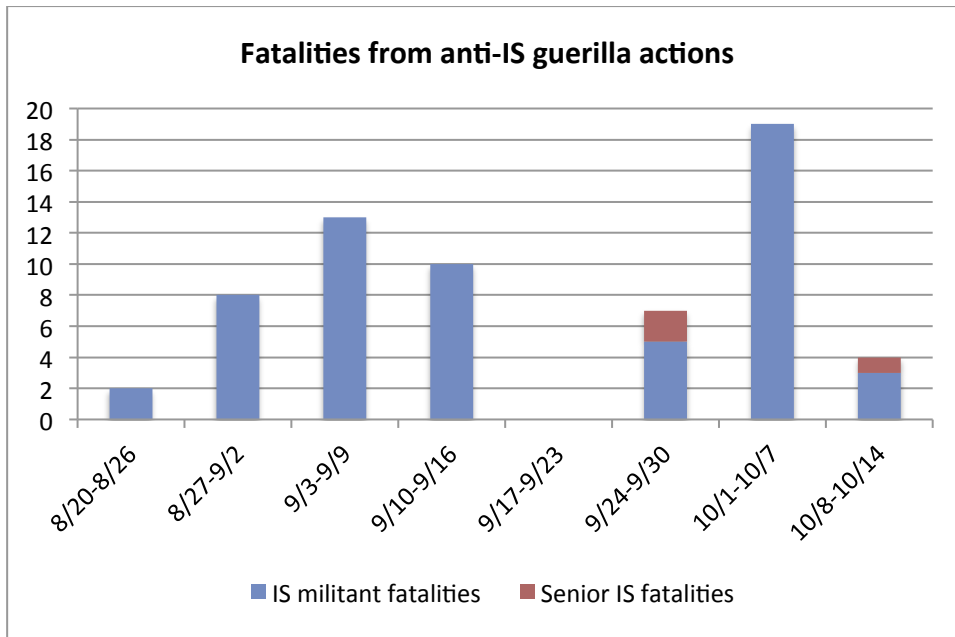
Analysis: IS executions of civilians are significantly higher over the past three weeks than during the five weeks prior, with 33 executions reported since Sept. 24 and just 7 reported between Aug. 20 and Sept. 23. Meanwhile, executions of IS members have halted, with none reported during the last eight weeks. IS executions of its own militants were a regular occurrence during the first half of 2016. While we can only speculate why the group stopped executing its own militants, possibilities include:

- Need for all available manpower
- Fear that executions will hurt already low morale, or cause mass defections
- Prior rounds of executions sufficiently cowed remaining IS militants

Previous data analysis suggests IS increases its execution of civilians in areas that it feels are under imminent threat from security forces. That nearly three times as many civilians were killed in the weeks leading up to the launch of the campaign to liberate Mosul than in the preceding month-plus support that theory. Anti-IS forces can take heart in the fact that in nearly all prior locales where a spike in executions was noted – including Qayara, Hajji Ali and surrounding environs, and the Daquq area – IS ultimately lost the urban areas in which executions spiked.

The reasons for the executions also seem to support the argument that IS uses executions as a means of sewing terror to prevent dissent. All of those executed in the month of Oct. have been accused of collaboration with security forces or being a member of Kataeb al-Mosul, and all but one of those executed in the last week of Sept. were accused of promoting pro-Iraqi government messages.

Violence perpetrated against IS: The following two charts track violence perpetrated against IS inside Mosul city. Locals overwhelmingly attribute the violence to Kataeb al-Mosul (KM). KM is an umbrella group consisting of at least three distinct guerilla units, according to KM militants. Former Ninewa governor Athil al-Nujaifi claims to hold command and control over the group, though the extent to which this is true is not clear. Other insurgent groups with no ties to KM or Nujaifi may well be operating in the sphere. The below charts therefore cover all anti-IS insurgent violence, and do not attempt to disaggregate attacks by actor.



Analysis: IS fatalities from anti-IS guerilla attacks inside the city of Mosul have remained relatively steady over the past two months. A spike in fatalities was recorded in the first week of October though this was largely the result of one mass-casualty IED attack in Mosul's Wadi Hajjar neighborhood, which resulted in 14 IS fatalities.

There has been an upward trend in both the number of attacks carried out by anti-IS guerillas, and the fatalities resulting from those attacks between Aug. and Oct. In Aug. members anti-IS our reporting picked up an average two attacks per week by anti-IS guerillas operating in Mosul city, while in the past three weeks (Sept. 24 – Oct. 14), our reporting picked up nearly four attacks per week. Small arms attacks, many of them ambushes of IS fighters at checkpoints or in their cars, remain the most common type of attack carried out by anti-IS guerillas, IED use is on the rise.

Fatalities from those attacks averaged 5 per week in Aug., 7 per week in Sept., and 11 per week thus far in Oct. – a clear upward trend.

Preliminary data from the week of Oct. 15-21 suggests a substantial uptick in attack volume and lethality. This will be explored in an "Inside Mosul update: Weekly analysis of violence" BULLETIN that will be released on Oct. 24.

The increase in international media attention on Mosul coinciding with the lead up to the Mosul offensive has caused a commensurate increase in public attention paid to the indigenous anti-IS guerrillas, particularly Kataeb al-Mosul, Though the above charts show a degree of increase in volume and lethality of anti-IS guerrilla attacks, the increase in attention paid to the guerrillas appears to have more to do with a renewed international interest in Mosul, rather than a massive spike in the group's activity over the past month.

That being said, we do anticipate that anti-IS guerrillas are significantly stepping up the tempo of their attacks to coincide with the Oct. 17 commencement of the renewed push by Iraqi security forces and Peshmerga towards Mosul.

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