



## Another ISIS suicide bombing attack targets Americans and Kurds; ISIS threatens more attacks

January 22, 2019

### Overview

► On January 21, 2019, ISIS carried out a suicide bombing attack using a car bomb against a joint American-Kurdish patrol. The attack occurred near a roadblock west of the city of al-Shaddadi, south of al-Hasakeh (a region east of the Euphrates under Kurdish control). According to American army and Kurdish announcements, no one was harmed (ISIS claimed that more than 13 people were killed and according to the Syrian media, at least five Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) fighters were killed). **ISIS threatened additional attacks targeting the Americans and Kurds** ("...what happened to you in al-Hasakeh is the beginning of the flood...")

**The attack came after an ISIS suicide bombing attack in the city of Manbij on January 16, 2019 targeting a joint American-Kurdish patrol.** Nineteen people were killed in the attack (including four Americans and five Kurds). **Behind the attacks and the threat is ISIS's desire to show that the withdrawal of the American soldiers from Syria is going to be accompanied by attacks and losses inflicted by ISIS on the Americans and their Kurdish allies** (thus representing the American withdrawal as a failure). **It can be assumed that ISIS will make an effort to realize its threat and will try to accompany the American withdrawal with more attacks on American forces.**<sup>1</sup>

### The Attack (Initial Overview)

► On **January 21, 2019**, a car bomb exploded next to a joint American army-SDF forces patrol at a roadblock located about 13 kilometers (about 8 miles) west of the city of al-Shaddadi (in the heart of the area controlled by the Kurds east of the Euphrates, 47 kilometers (29 miles) south of al-Hasakeh). The car bomb exploded as a motorized force of the international coalition passed next to it. According to American and SDF announcements, no one was injured. On the other hand, the Syrian media reported that at least five SDF fighters were

<sup>1</sup> For further information see the January 17, 2019 bulletin, "ISIS Mass-Casualty Suicide Bombing Attack in Manbij and Its Significance (Initial Report)."

killed and the vehicle they were in was destroyed (Baladi, January 21, 2019). Another source reported that at least five SDF fighters were killed and several fighters were injured, including two American soldiers (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, January 21, 2019; Furat FM, January 21, 2019).



Right: Al-Shaddadi (Google Maps). Left: The scene of the explosion near the roadblock west of al-Shaddadi (Muhammad al-Hasheemi's Twitter account, January 21, 2019).



Right: One of the vehicles burning after the detonation of the car bomb. Left: Other vehicles in the convoy which were unharmed (Furat FM, January 21, 2019).

## Initial Responses to the Attack

### American and SDF responses

► **The American army** announced that a car bomb was used to attack a joint American-Syrian [i.e., Kurdish] force. **According to the announcement no Americans were hurt** (spokesman for Operation Inherent Resolve's Twitter account [Spokesperson@OIRSpox OIR], January 21, 2019).

► SDF forces announced that a suicide bomber used a car bomb to attack a joint Kurdish-coalition forces' unit patrol on a routine mission along the road leading to al-Shaddadi.

**According to the SDF the attack failed because of the awareness of the Kurdish forces.**

**There was no loss of life, only material damage** (SDF Press, January 21, 2019).

### **ISIS's response**

► **ISIS was quick to issue an announcement claiming responsibility for the attack.**

According to the announcement, a suicide bomber named Abdallah al-Ansari drove a car bomb to a motorized column of American and SDF forces (called the PKK) in the city of al-Shaddadi. He blew the car up next to them, killing and wounding more than 13 people (**Note:** The ITIC has no verification of the ISIS claim). **The claim of responsibility ends with a threat to the American and Kurdish forces**, saying that "With the aid of Allah, the Crusaders and their proxies who have abandoned the religion of Islam [i.e., the Kurds and anyone cooperating with the West] will see things that will turn their hair gray from fright.. **What happened in al-Hasakeh and Manbij is the beginning of the flood.** The oppressors will experience upheavals."