

# The ISIL's Stand in the Ramadi-Falluja Corridor

by [Michael Knights \(/experts/michael-knights\)](/experts/michael-knights)

May 29, 2014

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



[Michael Knights \(/experts/michael-knights\)](/experts/michael-knights)

Michael Knights is the Jill and Jay Bernstein Senior Fellow at The Washington Institute and cofounder of the Militia Spotlight platform, which offers in-depth analysis of developments related to Iran-backed militias.



Articles & Testimony

---

**If current trends continue, the ISIL's latest gambit could bring a strategic reversal for the movement in Iraq.**

***The following is an excerpt. To read the full version of this report, download the PDF or [visit the CTC website \(https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/the-isils-stand-in-the-ramadi-falluja-corridor\)](https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/the-isils-stand-in-the-ramadi-falluja-corridor).***

Since December 30, 2013, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) has sought to carve out an area of control in the Iraqi cities of Ramadi and Falluja, as well as in the Euphrates River delta between these urban areas. These locations are replete with symbolic and strategic significance for the ISIL. The movement's forerunner, al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), fought in the iconic twin battles for Falluja in March and November 2004, an event that fanned the flames of Iraq's Sunni insurgency for years afterwards. In late 2006, Anbar tribes turned decisively against AQI and its affiliates in the provincial capital of Ramadi, beginning the movement's near-fatal deterioration. These cities and their outlying rural satellites continue to be key terrain: the Ramadi-Falluja corridor is just 22 miles from the capital's international airport and sits astride the country's main trucking highways to Jordan and Syria. Iraqi security forces have been excluded from Falluja -- a city with a population of more than 300,000 on Baghdad's doorstep -- for nearly five months.

This article recounts how the ISIL spread into Ramadi and Falluja, why it has failed to secure control of Ramadi, and the conditions that have led to its present control of Falluja. It finds that while the ISIL's activities in the Ramadi-Falluja corridor are concerning, the extent of the movement's real control of the area is debatable. Furthermore, the ISIL may have overreached by committing itself to the defense of terrain, particularly in urban areas so close to the Iraqi government's logistical bases around Baghdad. If current trends continue, the ISIL's gambit in the Ramadi-Falluja corridor could bring a strategic reversal for the movement within the Iraqi theater... ❖

---

## RECOMMENDED

---



BRIEF ANALYSIS

### [Tracking Anti-U.S. Strikes in Iraq and Syria During the Gaza Crisis](#)

Jun 4, 2024

◆  
Michael Knights,  
Amir al-Kaabi,  
Hamdi Malik

[\(/policy-analysis/tracking-anti-us-strikes-iraq-and-syria-during-gaza-crisis\)](#)



BRIEF ANALYSIS

### [How Sustainable Are Defense and Deterrence Methods in Light of Iran's Attack?](#)

May 6, 2024

◆  
Andrew G. Clemmensen

[\(/policy-analysis/how-sustainable-are-defense-and-deterrence-methods-light-irans-attack\)](#)



ARTICLES & TESTIMONY

### [A Yom Hashoah Message, from Disgust to Hope](#)

May 5, 2024

◆  
Robert Satloff

[\(/policy-analysis/yom-hashoah-message-disgust-hope\)](#)

## TOPICS

[Military & Security \(/policy-analysis/military-security\)](/policy-analysis/military-security)

[Terrorism \(/policy-analysis/terrorism\)](/policy-analysis/terrorism)

## REGIONS & COUNTRIES

[Iraq \(/policy-analysis/iraq\)](/policy-analysis/iraq)