

Iraq Situation Report: April 30-May 1, 2015

1 On May 1, a Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) media spokesperson stated that ISIS launched an attack on Sinjar district, west of Mosul. Peshmerga assisted by coalition airstrikes repelled the attack, killing 21 ISIS members.



2 On April 30, a Federal police (FP) source in Salah al-Din stated that ISIS cut off supplies between the Baiji oil refinery northeast of Baiji, and Baiji, south of the refinery. Meanwhile, clashes took place as ISIS attacked security forces inside the facility, per the commander of Salah ad-Din Operations Command (SDOC.) Later, a source from the FP stated that the FP controls all buildings in the facility and that ISIS members were setting oil ablaze to signal their control. The source did not specify whether ISIS members were burning the oil inside or outside the refinery. On May 1, CENTCOM reported that four coalition airstrikes, on April 29 and 30, struck “one large and three small” tactical units of ISIS in addition to destroying three vehicles and a fighting position of the group.



3 On April 30, military reinforcements from the FP and “Popular Mobilization” reportedly arrived at Baiji district coming through Mazraa village, south of Baiji. A security source stated that ISIS attacked Mazraa, but IA Aviation and coalition airstrikes repelled the attack. A FP source stated that clashes were also occurring on the road between Mazraa and the Seneya area, west of Baiji.



4 On May 1, the Anbar police commander stated that a force from Iraqi Army (IA), Iraqi Police (IP), and tribal fighters, supported by coalition airstrikes, conducted a security operation targeting ISIS positions in Albu Thiab and Jazeera, northwest of Ramadi; Albu Ghanam and Sofiya, northeast of Ramadi; Albu Faraj, north of Ramadi; Sijariya, east of Ramadi; and Houz, in south-western Ramadi, killing 16 ISIS fighters and destroying a weapons cache and “a number” of vehicles outfitted with heavy machine guns.



5 On April 30, a VBIED exploded in the Dakhil area of Sadr City in northeastern Baghdad, killing two people and wounding 12 others. Another VBIED exploded in 83 Square in the Talbiya area of eastern Baghdad, killing four people and wounding 15 others. Two VBIEDs exploded in the Iskan area in western Baghdad, killing seven people and wounding 29 others.

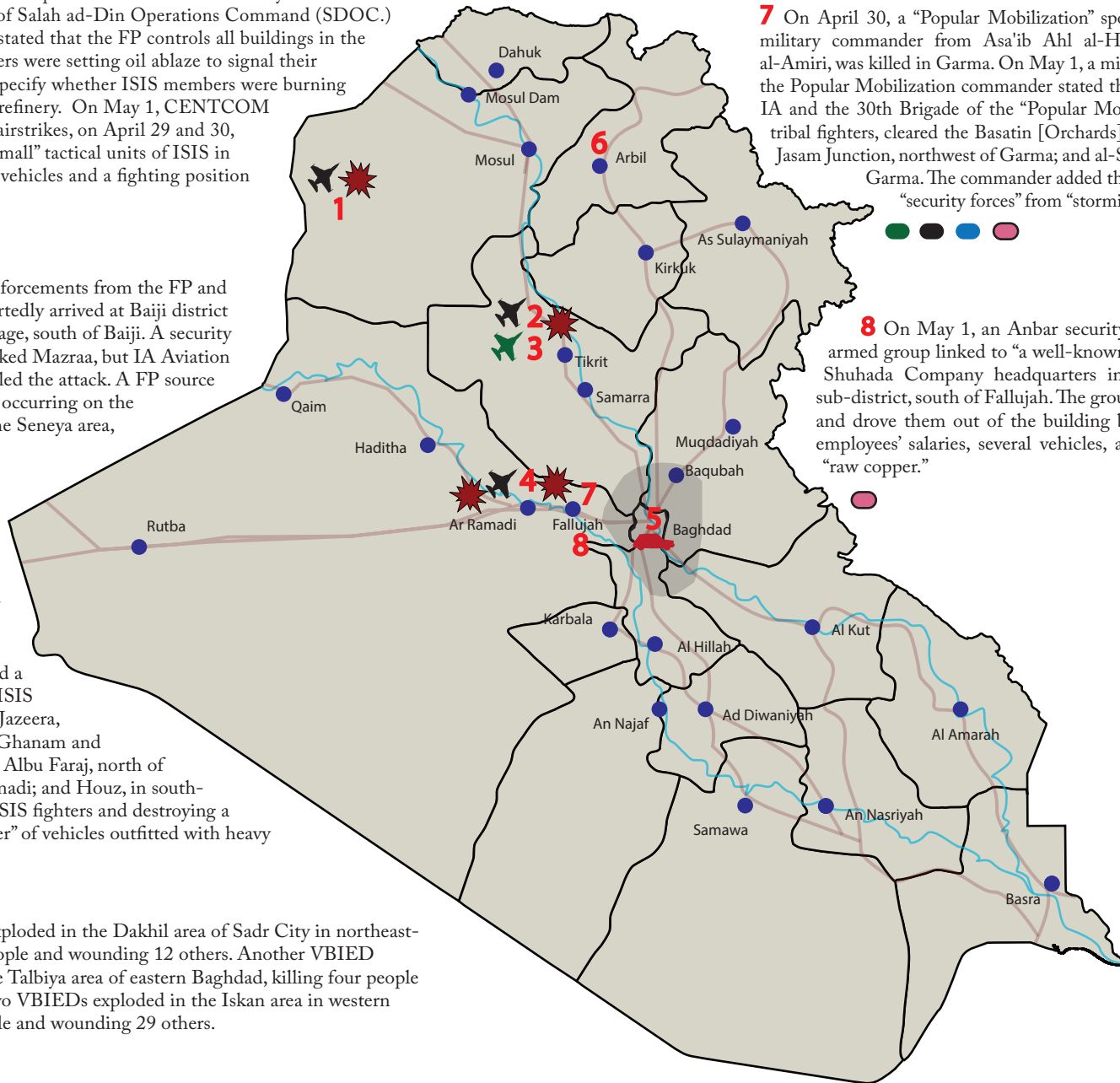


6 On April 30, the media director of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) Interior Ministry, Rizkall Abdullah, stated that a delegation from the Iraqi Interior Ministry (MoI) and Defense Ministry (MoD) along with Ambassador Stuart Jones and “several” U.S. generals met in Arbil to discuss opening a joint operations room for Mosul operations.

7 On April 30, a “Popular Mobilization” spokesperson stated that a military commander from Asa’ib Ahl al-Haq (AAH), Abu Musa al-Amiri, was killed in Garma. On May 1, a military commander within the Popular Mobilization commander stated that a joint force from the IA and the 30th Brigade of the “Popular Mobilization,” consisting of tribal fighters, cleared the Basatin [Orchards] area, near Garma; Albu Jasam Junction, northwest of Garma; and al-Sanai neighborhood, near Garma. The commander added that “600 meters” separates “security forces” from “storming” the center of Garma.



8 On May 1, an Anbar security source stated that an armed group linked to “a well-known militia” “stormed” the Shuhada Company headquarters in Amiriyat al-Fallujah sub-district, south of Fallujah. The group assaulted the staffers and drove them out of the building before confiscating the employees’ salaries, several vehicles, and large quantities of “raw copper.”



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Content: Sinan Adnan, Patrick Martin, and Omar al-Dulimi
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The government has yet to launch major operations in Anbar. Meanwhile, various Iraqi Shi'a militias have expressed interest in deploying to Anbar, although such calls have not yet translated to realities on the ground. There is almost certainly no consensus on the Anbari side regarding the participation of these militias. The prime minister also likely opposes the deployment of militias to Anbar because of its potential to undermine ISF command and control in the province. The ISF, however, is likely unable to launch Anbar operations on their own for lack of manpower. Seeking to address this, the prime minister on April 30, 2015 issued a 30-day amnesty for ISF members that had previously deserted to return to their units. This is likely an effort to expand ISF operations. It is important to watch the level of participation in this amnesty. Also, the government appears to be moving further in the direction of arming tribal fighters after enlisting them under the “Popular Mobilization.” The success of these moves would significantly support operations in Anbar. Meanwhile, ISIS is increasing the rate of its terrorist attacks in the capital which indicates that the organization has reestablished itself near Baghdad in a way that allows it to deploy VBIEDs. It also reflect the capacity of the organization to conduct hybridized warfare, shifting between conventional and terrorist attacks.