

# Iraq Situation Report: 9 - 11 May, 2015

**1** Between May 7 and 9, DoD stated that seven coalition airstrikes targeted VBIEDS and fighting positions of ISIS "near Baiji." On May 8 and 9, chairman of Salah ad-Din and a spokesperson of the Popular Mobilization denied reports of ISIS having control over most of the refinery. On May 9, security forces foiled an SVBIED attack. On May 11, a source stated that Golden Division (GD) under Counter Terrorism Service (CTS) and "Popular Mobilization" members recaptured seven guard towers and the two main gates from ISIS. He further stated that security forces in the refinery were holding positions with the help of air-dropped supplies, while reinforcements were "600 meters away" and clearing a road near Abu Jiwari, south of the refinery that is used by ISIS as a launch point for attacks.

**2** On May 9, a security source stated that Iraqi Police (IP), Iraqi Army (IA), and al-Alam and Hawija "Popular Mobilization" battalions killed 29 ISIS fighters and captured weapons and six vehicles from ISIS in the Hamrin Mountains, east of Tikrit. The source added that Interior Minister Mohammad al-Ghaban and Badr Organization leader Hadi al-Amiri were in the area. The MoI spokesperson stated that Federal Police (FP) launched a major attack on Hamrin, killing 50 ISIS fighters in Ajil and Alas oil fields, east of Tikrit. On May 10, ISIS launched an attack on Ajil Oil Field that was repelled, killing 73 ISIS fighters and three members of the security forces and injuring 13 others. On May 11, Saraya al-Jihad, a Shi'a militia, launched an attack on a "strategic area" in Hamrin Mountains, reportedly clearing the area of ISIS control.

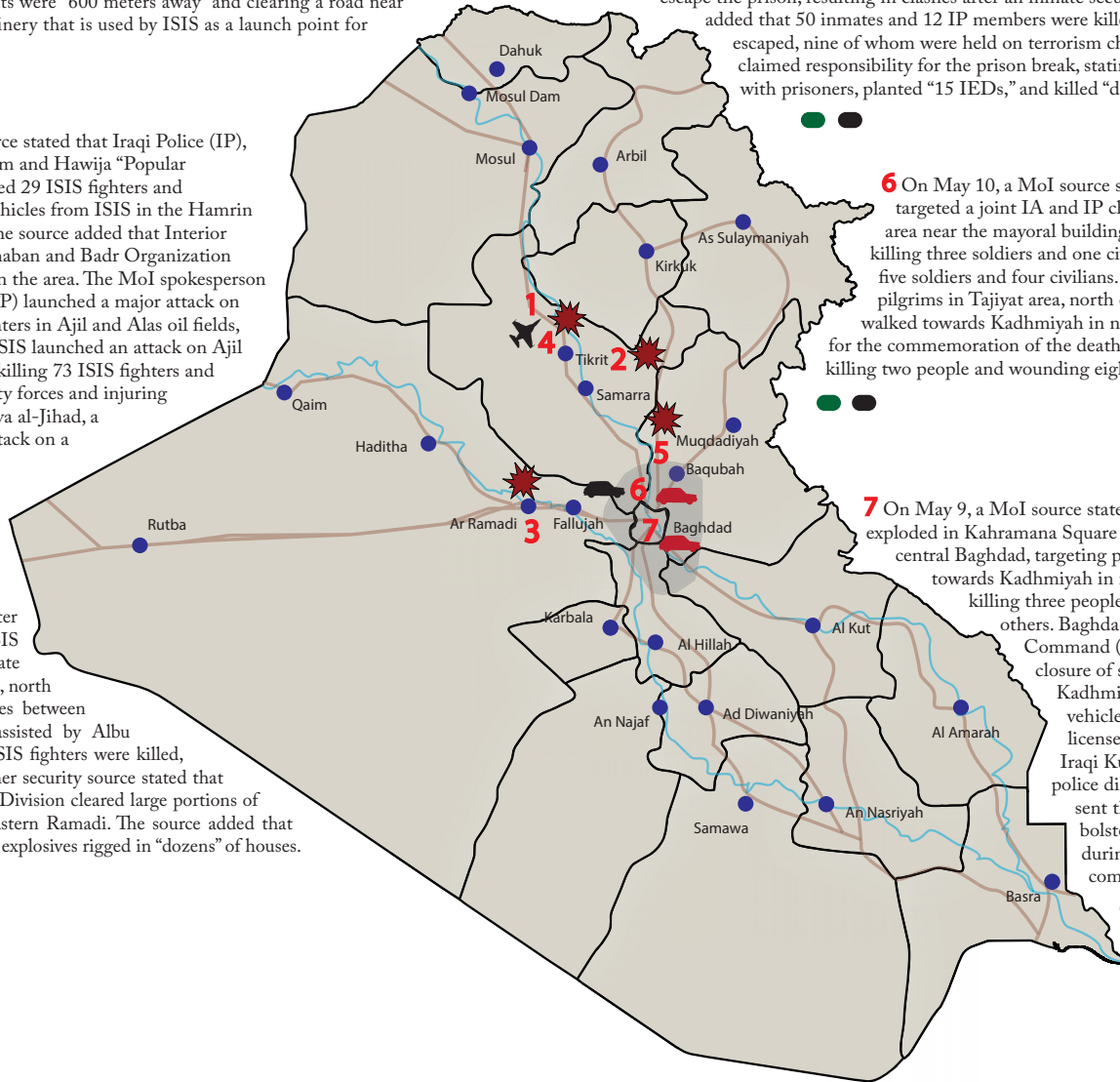
**3** On May 9, a tribal fighter stated that a "number" of ISIS fighters attempted to infiltrate Ramadi from Albu Faraj area, north of Ramadi, leading to clashes between ISIS and "security forces" assisted by Albu Thiab tribal fighters. Three ISIS fighters were killed, and the rest withdrew. Another security source stated that local IP, FP, and the Golden Division cleared large portions of al-Zira'a neighborhood in eastern Ramadi. The source added that engineering units dismantled explosives rigged in "dozens" of houses.

**4** On May 11, the Salah al-Din governor announced an operation to clear the main area of Baiji area from two directions to retake areas adjacent to the Tigris and to open a supply line of the Baiji Oil Refinery.

**5** On May 9, a security source stated that prison inmates at the Khalis police directorate prison in Khalis, northwest of Baquba staged a riot in an attempt to escape the prison, resulting in clashes after an inmate secured a weapon. He added that 50 inmates and 12 IP members were killed, and 40 inmates escaped, nine of whom were held on terrorism charges. ISIS later claimed responsibility for the prison break, stating that it coordinated with prisoners, planted "15 IEDs," and killed "dozens" of Iraqi soldiers.

**6** On May 10, a MoI source stated that a SVBIED targeted a joint IA and IP checkpoint in Tarmiyah area near the mayoral building, north of Baghdad, killing three soldiers and one civilian and wounding five soldiers and four civilians. A VBIED targeted pilgrims in Tajiyat area, north of Baghdad, as they walked towards Kadhmiyah in northwestern Baghdad for the commemoration of the death of Imam al-Kadhim, killing two people and wounding eight others.

**7** On May 9, a MoI source stated that a VBIED exploded in Kahramana Square in Karrada area of central Baghdad, targeting pilgrims walking towards Kadhmiyah in northwestern Baghdad, killing three people and wounding 25 others. Baghdad Operations Command (BOC) announced the closure of several roads to Kadhmiyah and a curfew for vehicles bearing temporary licenses and vehicles from Iraqi Kurdistan. The Mayssan police directorate stated that it sent the "5th Battalion" to bolster security in Baghdad during the Imam al-Kadhim commemoration.



- Major Cities
- ✈ Coalition Airstrikes
- ★ Major Clash
- ▨ Coalition
- 🚗 SVBIED
- 🔥 VBIED
- ISF
- Iraqi Shi'a militias
- Anti-ISIS Iraqi Sunni Tribes
- ISIS

Content: Sinan Adnan, Patrick Martin, and Omar al-Dulimi  
 Graphics: Evan Sterling

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The prison break in Khalis that resulted in the escape of ISIS fighters was reminiscent of previous attacks by ISIS that replenished its ranks in 2012-2013. The prison break on May 9 nevertheless differed from previous prison breaks in that it took place in Khalis, a mostly Shi'a area and reportedly occurred largely inside the prison. Previous prison attacks by ISIS consisted of complex attacks involving VBIEDs, mortars, and SVESTs outside prisons in Sunni areas such as Abu Ghraib. These differences speak to ISIS's inability to muster complex attacks in Diyala, where it was dislodged in January 2015. Nevertheless the prison break on May 9 also indicates a likely resurgence of ISIS in the Diyala in the near future, one of AQI's original strongholds. ISIS has claimed responsibility for the attack, although a senior Sunni politician has made a counter claim alleging that the attack was the work of Shi'a militias who wanted to free a prisoner and kill Sunni inmates in the process. This statement has not been verified, and the exact details of the attack remain unknown. Elsewhere, ISIS is becoming more active in areas east of Tikrit, particularly near the Hamrin Ridge where it can threaten the security of newly cleared areas. Meanwhile, mostly Shi'a pilgrims are on their way to commemorate the death of Imam al-Kadhim in Kadhmiya in northwestern Baghdad, an occasion frequently accompanied by high security measures in and around the capital and attacks by ISIS on pilgrims. Recent events are consistent with this pattern. The ISF remain engaged with ISIS in the Baiji Oil Refinery, and the exact status of the facility remains unclear. An operation to break ISIS's siege around the facility would likely need to be extensive given ISIS's entrenched presence in the urban terrain in Baiji as well as villages north of the facility in the Zaab triangle.