

Iraq Situation Report: May 12-13, 2015

1 On May 13, the Defense Ministry (MoD) stated that a coalition airstrike killed senior ISIS leader Abu Alaa al-Afri, and an ISIS court official at the Shuhada Mosque in Ayadhiya sub-district northeast of Tal Afar. DoD stated that one coalition airstrike struck ISIS targets "near Tal Afar." CENTCOM stated that it is aware of media reports regarding the death of ISIS's second-in-command but noted that it has "no information to corroborate these claims."



2 On May 13, ISF sources inside the besieged Baiji Refinery reported multiple daily ISIS attacks involving direct and indirect fire and stated that ISIS militants have taken up fighting positions near gas tanks in an effort to deter coalition airstrikes. Air supplies were being dropped but Iraqi reinforcements have failed to reach the refinery. An ISF member compared the ISIS push for the refinery to that for Kobani in Syria. On a separate front, ISF and Popular Mobilization forces are continuing their push to retake Baiji and the nearby Siniya sub-district. However, the operation has been hampered by the unilateralism of Popular Mobilization forces, creating a situation which an ISF colonel described as "chaotic." On May 13, DoD confirmed four coalition airstrikes "near Baiji".



3 On May 11, Kata'ib Hezbollah (KH) stated that KH destroyed "six" ISIS SVBIEDs which targeted KH positions in the al-Hayakil area, southeast of Fallujah. On May 13, KH stated that ISIS attacked the al-Hayakil area from four axes with three VBIEDs. KH stated that it repelled the attack but noted that clashes were ongoing.



4 On May 12, a security source stated that coalition airstrikes targeted ISIS positions in Garma sub-district, northeast of Fallujah, destroying four weapons depots and vehicles while killing several ISIS leaders. BOC stated that it killed 12 ISIS members including three wearing SVESTs, diffused one VBIED, and captured weapons and bomb-making materials in the area. On May 13, a security source stated that ISIS attacked security forces in the Harariat area of Garma but were repelled by a 1st IA Division force. DoD stated that between May 11 and 13, three airstrikes targeted ISIS "near Fallujah." Also on May 13, an Anbar Operations Command (AOC) source stated that security forces and the Popular Mobilization launched an operation to clear the cement plant area east of Fallujah, killing 13 ISIS members and destroying "a number of vehicles." He added that operation opened supply lines between the Mazraa Camp, east of Fallujah, and the IA, SWAT, and 2nd Anbar Emergency Battalion forces stationed at the Cement Plant.



- Major Cities
- Major Clash
- Coalition
- VBIED
- Kidnapping
- Anti-ISIS Iraqi Sunni Tribes
- ISIS
- SVBIED
- ISF
- Iraqi Shi'a militias
- Unknown Gunmen

5 On May 12, an "informed" source in Ninewa province stated that ISIS kidnapped 15 Jubur tribe members who are relatives of the commander of Ninewa Operations Command from the al-Salamiya area southeast of Mosul. DoD stated that between May 11 and May 13, five airstrikes targeted ISIS fighting positions "near Mosul."

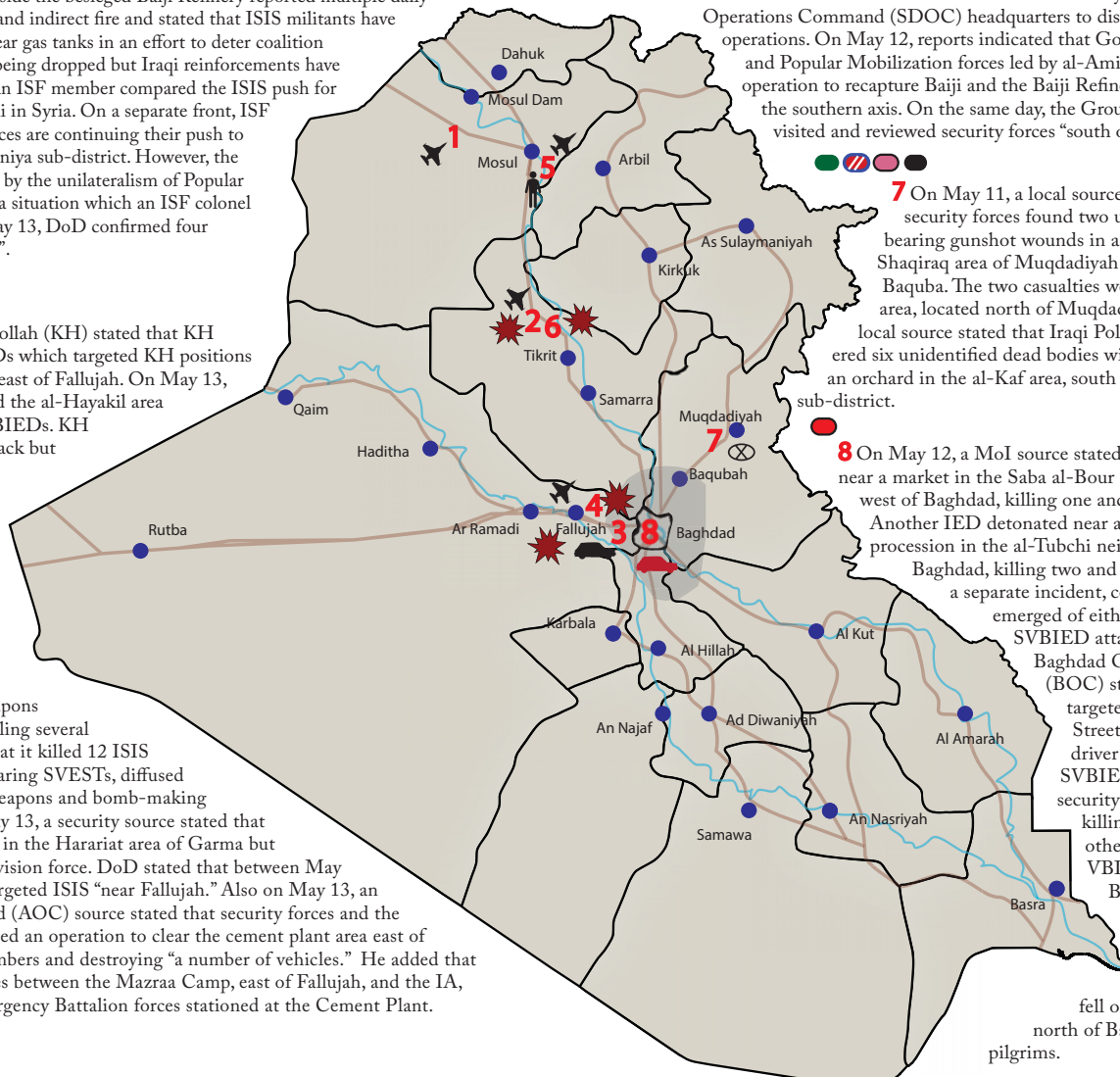


6 On May 11 an anonymous source reported that Badr Organization leader Hadi al-Amiri and Popular Mobilization Commission (PMC) Deputy Chairman Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis met with "security leaders" at Salah al-Din Operations Command (SDOC) headquarters to discuss the Baiji Refinery operations. On May 12, reports indicated that Golden Division (GD), FP, and Popular Mobilization forces led by al-Amiri initiated a military operation to recapture Baiji and the Baiji Refinery with Ameri leading the southern axis. On the same day, the Ground Forces Commander visited and reviewed security forces "south of Baiji."



7 On May 11, a local source in Diyala stated that security forces found two unidentified dead bodies bearing gunshot wounds in an orchard in the Shaqiraq area of Muqaddiyah district, northeast of Baquba. The two casualties were residents of the Balur area, located north of Muqaddiyah. On May 12, a local source stated that Iraqi Police (IP) forces discovered six unidentified dead bodies with gunshot wounds in an orchard in the al-Kaf area, south of Muqaddiyah sub-district.

8 On May 12, a MoI source stated that an IED detonated near a market in the Saba al-Bour neighborhood, northwest of Baghdad, killing one and injuring six others. Another IED detonated near a Kadhmiya pilgrim procession in the al-Tubchi neighborhood of western Baghdad, killing two and injuring eight others. In a separate incident, conflicting reports emerged of either an SVEST or SVBIED attack in central Baghdad. Baghdad Operations Command (BOC) stated that an SVBIED targeted pilgrims on Saadoun Street in central Baghdad. The driver detonated either the SVBIED or an SVEST after security forces opened fire, killing two and injuring four others. Also on May 12, a VBIED targeted pilgrims in Bab al-Sharqi in central Baghdad, killing four people and wounding 12 others. Two Katyusha rockets fell on the Bub al-Sham area north of Baghdad, injuring four pilgrims.



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



©2015 by the Institute for the Study of War

CENTCOM has not confirmed the death of senior ISIS leader Abu Ala al-Afri following a statement from the Iraqi Defense Ministry indicating that a coalition airstrike based on prior intelligence had killed Afri near Mosul. Reports of senior ISIS casualties usually take time to confirm. Elsewhere in Iraq, the contest over the Baiji Oil Refinery remains ongoing. Any ground move to retake Baiji Refinery will require Iraqi forces to move through the main area of Baiji District south of the refinery. As such, ISF and militias launched an operation yesterday with the objective to retake Baiji and reach the refinery. The party exercising command-and-control over this operation remains unclear at this time. This is a particularly pressing issue due to the reported presence of both the Ground Forces Commander and Badr Organization head Hadi al-Amiri in the same area. If confirmed, the presence of Ameri would represent a notable inflection point given his absence from major military operations following his failed Iranian-backed attempt to enter Tikrit in March 2015. Meanwhile, attacks on religious pilgrims in and around Baghdad have escalated as thousands march to the shrine of Imam al-Kadhim in northwestern Baghdad. Despite the highly-elevated security presence around the shrine, the threat of an ISIS attack is not diminished.