

Iraq Situation Report: May 14-15, 2015

1 On May 14, the Albu Nimr tribal leader stated that ISIS attacked Jubba village, north of Baghdadi sub-district with seven SVBIEDs. Anbar Operations Command (AOC) stated that security forces with coalition “air cover” conducted operations in Baghdadi, clearing the main sector of Majid area, Jawaana, and Jabria villages and killing 18 ISIS members. According to local sources ISIS surrounded and attacked the complex and injured the commander of the 14th Emergency Battalion. On May 15, the Albu Nimr tribal leader stated that ISIS attacked Jubba from “all sides,” including from across the river, capturing Jubba. The tribal leader also stated that ISIS captured vehicles, weapons, and equipment and transported them to Hit. ISIS reportedly continues its siege on the residential complex in Baghdadi sub-district, which lies northeast of Asad Airbase and houses 700 families. ● ● ●

2 On May 15 ISIS launched a VBIED wave in downtown Ramadi targeting the police station, the education department, the government complex, the municipal building, a school in Albu Dhiab, and the Anbar Operations Command (AOC) with 8-14 VBIEDS. Later, an anonymous source stated that ISIS captured the government complex and raised its flag while security forces retreated to the AOC, although this report has not been confirmed. The Ramadi mayor stated that ISIS lay siege to the AOC headquarters and executed “dozens” of security personnel and civilians in central Ramadi. ISIS then attacked Jamia area adjacent to the government complex and reportedly captured the Thila and 17th Street areas, as well as Albu Alwan, Qitana, and Farsan areas, exploiting inclement weather to launch the attack and forcing civilians to displace. ISIS also captured the Voice of Anbar radio station and burned bodies of security personnel in Jamia. Golden Division and SWAT reinforcements arrived, and the Joint Operations Command (JOC) announced a counterattack by the ISF and local anti-ISIS tribes with U.S.-led coalition and Iraqi airstrikes. The AOC stated that coalition airstrikes killed 40 ISIS members and destroyed “dozens” of vehicles. On May 15, DoD confirmed one U.S.-led coalition airstrike against an ISIS headquarters “near Ramadi.” Three IA battalions from Baghdad, Habaniya, and Khalidiya areas also reinforced Ramadi. A source stated that ISIS later retreated from central Ramadi. ● ● ● ● ●

3 On May 14, a MoI source stated that rumors of an SVEST in a Kadhimiya pilgrim procession caused some pilgrims to attack the investment department building of the Sunni Endowment in the majority Sunni Adhamiya neighborhood in northern Baghdad. Security forces closed entrances to Adhamiya. PM Haidar al-Abadi and Defense Minister Khalid al-Obeidi visited the area and called for calm. The commander of the Baghdad Operations Command (BOC) stated that five houses and several vehicles had been damaged and 15 attackers arrested. Osama al-Nujaifi and the Sunni Fiqh Council called on PM Abadi to punish the attackers and form a special force to protect Adhamiya. An Etihad member said that the incident proves that “ISIS and the militias are two sides of the same coin,” while Ahmed al-Masari, head of the Sunni Etihad bloc in the CoR called on international organizations to intervene and protect Iraqi Sunnis. Sadrist Trend leader Muqtada al-Sadr, Vice Presidents Iyad Allawi and Nouri al-Maliki, and Shi’a Endowment leader Alaa al-Musawi denounced the attacks. ●

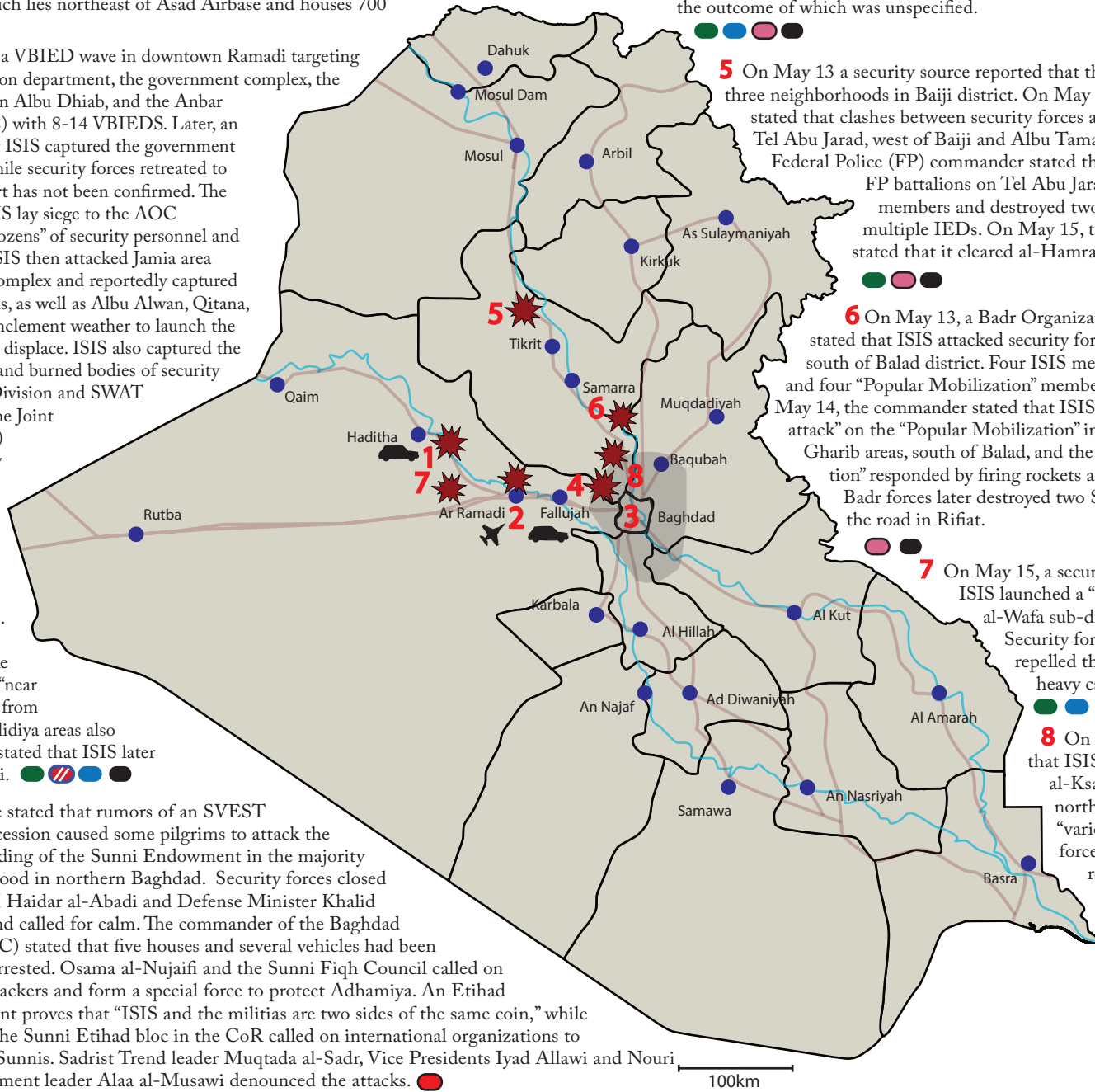
4 On May 13, Nujaba Movement (NM) stated that ISIS attacked a plaster factory in outer Garma sub-district, northeast of Fallujah, and that NM repelled the attack. On May 14 an AOC source stated that ISIS regained control of al-Rawfa and al-Kinatir areas, north of Garma, capturing equipment and vehicles several days after security forces had recaptured the areas. Also on May 14, a “Popular Mobilization” commander stated that ISF and the Popular Mobilization launched an operation near al-Harariat factories area in Garma, killing three ISIS members and an ISIS “leader,” and destroying three vehicles. On May 15, a source stated that ISIS also captured al-Harariat factories area, seizing 30 vehicles and moving them to Fallujah. ISIS also launched a “major offensive” on the 1st Division headquarters at Camp Mazraa, east of Fallujah, the outcome of which was unspecified. ● ● ● ● ●

5 On May 13 a security source reported that the ISF had retaken three neighborhoods in Baiji district. On May 14, the Baiji mayor stated that clashes between security forces and ISIS continue in Tel Abu Jarad, west of Baiji and Albu Tama, south of Baiji. A Federal Police (FP) commander stated that a rapid attack by FP battalions on Tel Abu Jarad area killed ten ISIS members and destroyed two VBIEDs and multiple IEDs. On May 15, the Nujaba Movement stated that it cleared al-Hamra area, south of Baiji. ● ● ● ● ●

6 On May 13, a Badr Organization commander stated that ISIS attacked security forces in Sayyid Gharib, south of Balad district. Four ISIS members were killed and four “Popular Mobilization” members were wounded. On May 14, the commander stated that ISIS launched a “surprise attack” on the “Popular Mobilization” in Rifiat and Sayyid Gharib areas, south of Balad, and the “Popular Mobilization” responded by firing rockets at ISIS sites in the area. Badr forces later destroyed two SVBIEDs targeting the road in Rifiat. ● ● ● ● ●

7 On May 15, a security source stated that ISIS launched a “strong attack” on al-Wafa sub-district west of Ramadi. Security forces and tribal fighters repelled the attack and inflicted heavy casualties. ● ● ● ● ●

8 On May 14, a source stated that ISIS attacked al-Samilat, al-Ksarat, and al-Nebai areas northwest of Baghdad with “various weapons.” Security forces and tribal fighters repelled the attack and destroyed two vehicles outfitted with heavy machine guns. ● ● ● ● ●



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

Content: Theo Bell, and Patrick Martin
Graphics: Evan Sterling



©2015 by the Institute for the Study of War

ISIS conducted a main attack upon downtown Ramadi, reportedly making its greatest gains since December 2014, including multiple neighborhoods in central Ramadi and the unconfirmed capture of the Ramadi government complex. ISIS concurrently attacked northwest of Ramadi and in the village of Jubba near al-Asad Airbase, demonstrating resilience and operational-level coordination in Anbar and the continued ability to maneuver, particularly during inclement weather. ISIS's attacks in Ramadi also coincided with recent attacks this week in Deir ez Zour province in eastern Syria, potentially constituting a cross-front campaign by ISIS to consolidate control of the middle Euphrates in both Iraq and Syria. ISIS's attacks along the Euphrates in Anbar continue to challenge the ISF in their defense of key terrain in northern Iraq, where the ISF made gains against ISIS at the Baiji Oil Refinery. ISIS also seized the opportunity to attack ISF positions between Baghdad and Samarra while the ISF was likely focused upon the defense of Kadhimiya, though this was likely a supporting operation to further split ISF resources. While the May 15 assault in Ramadi demonstrates ISIS's ability to carry out complex, coordinated attacks, ISIS also maintains a powerful propaganda machine, which previously prompted ISF desertions and erroneous reports of Ramadi's fall during ISIS's previous assault on the city in April. ISIS claims to have captured major infrastructure in Ramadi on May 15 should be understood in this context. Despite initial setbacks, the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), augmented with Iraqi Army (IA), Golden Division, SWAT, and anti-ISIS Sunni tribal reinforcements launched a counter attack and regained parts of central Ramadi from ISIS. As of May 15, Ramadi remains contested, a status that has not changed since ISIS first threatened the city in January 2014. In Baghdad, sectarian tensions flared during the Kadhimiya pilgrimage on May 14 as a rumor of a suicide bomber prompted several Shi'a pilgrims to torch a Sunni Endowment building in the majority-Sunni northern Baghdad neighborhood of Adhamiya. The ISF responded quickly, and the attack was unanimously condemned by Iraqi government officials.