

Iraq Situation Report: May 23-25, 2015

1 On May 23, forces from the 1st Rapid Intervention Division killed four ISIS members and destroyed vehicles in Hitawin, east of Fallujah, and Nuaimiya, south of Fallujah. The IA and the ERD killed four ISIS members wearing SVESTs in Albu Khanfar area northwest of Garma. On May 24, a "Popular Mobilization" commander stated that his group killed six ISIS members in Garma and the MoD stated that IA Aviation struck ISIS targets, including a command center, in Garma. On May 25 forces from the 1st Emergency Response Division killed five ISIS members and destroyed a SVBIED and two vehicles in Thara Dijla, north of Garma.

2 On May 24, ISIS attacked the Baghdadi residential complex, north of Baghdadi sub-district and west of Hit district, with "150 terrorists" and "20 suicide bombers," deploying SVBIEDs and SVESTs. The ISF, IP, and Obeid tribal fighters, along with "air support" from the U.S.-led Coalition, repelled the attack and killed 50 ISIS members while destroying "many" vehicles. IA and the "Popular Mobilization" destroyed five SVBIEDs during the attack. The commander of the Jazeera and Badia Operations Command (JBOC) stated that ISIS attacked on two axes, and that the ISF repelled the attack, killing 35 ISIS members, and destroying five armored vehicles, a bulldozer, and an ISIS headquarters in al-Ishakiya area, east of Baghdadi. Between May 22-24, DoD stated that four airstrikes targeted ISIS "near" Baghdadi and al-Asad Airbase.

3 On May 22, the Federal Police (FP) "Scorpion Brigade" entered Ramadi. The "Popular Mobilization" reportedly joined tribal fighters and the ISF in clashing with ISIS in Abu Flis area, east of Ramadi, while substantial numbers had deployed to prevent ISIS from entering Habaniya, Husayba, and Khalidiya areas, east of Ramadi. On May 23, five Rapid Response Battalions arrived at Habaniya, while FP and "Popular Mobilization" reinforcements and ERD forces entered Khalidiya. On May 23 the ISF, including units from the Iraqi Police (IP), the FP, the Iraqi Army (IA), the ERBs, together with tribal fighters and the "Popular Mobilization," recaptured Husayba, Madiq, al-Kisara, and Sheikh Masoud areas east of Ramadi. On May 24, the Khalidiya local chairman stated that security forces controlled Khalidiya and Habaniya sub-district, and called on internally displaced persons (IDPs) from those areas to return to their homes. The IA and the "Popular Mobilization" recaptured al-Ankur area, south of Ramadi and that the ISF and the "Popular Mobilization" advanced toward Sura, al-Sufiya, and al-Zarrah areas east of Ramadi, and recaptured a hospital in al-Sijariya, area east of Ramadi. Between May 22-24, DoD stated that 13 airstrikes targeted ISIS "near Ramadi."

10 On May 24 PM Abadi held a meeting to discuss Anbar operations with National Security Council.

4 On May 23, The Guardian UK reported that two anonymous "U.S. officials" stated that Iranian forces had taken "a significant role" in the operation to recapture Baiji, and that "Iranians were operating artillery, 122mm rocket systems and surveillance and reconnaissance drones" to assist the Baiji operation. Also on May 23 DoD stated that four airstrikes targeted ISIS "near Baiji." On May 24, the Baiji mayor stated that Iraqi Special Operations Forces (ISOF), FP, Salah ad-Din police, "1,000" tribal fighters, and Popular Mobilization forces are in Baiji. IA Aviation strikes killed 30 ISIS members and destroyed vehicles and weapons caches in Baiji. On May 25, the "Popular Mobilization" began to clear Siniya, west of Baiji.

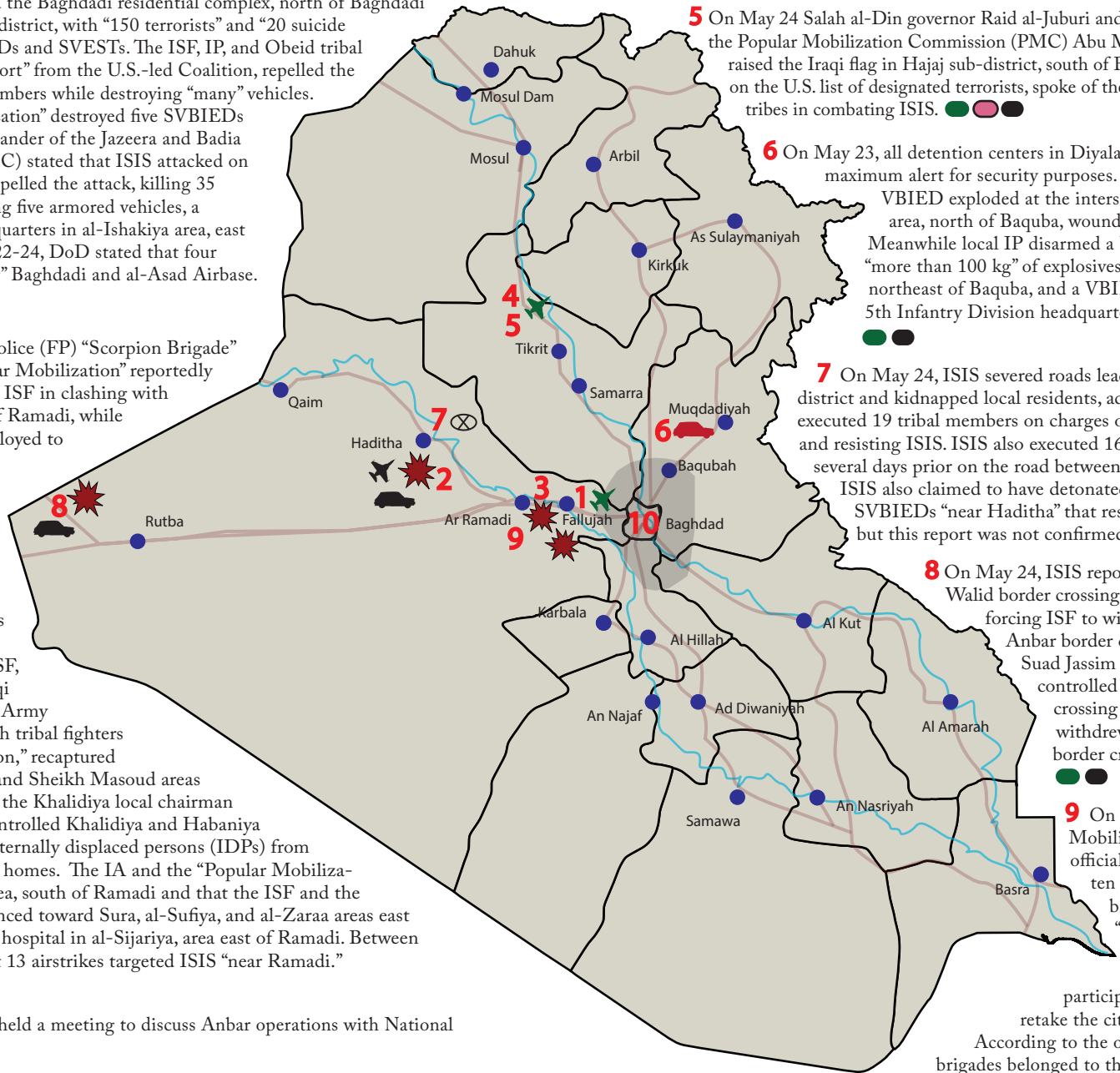
5 On May 24 Salah al-Din governor Raid al-Juburi and deputy chairman for the Popular Mobilization Commission (PMC) Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis raised the Iraqi flag in Hajaj sub-district, south of Baiji. Muhandis, who is on the U.S. list of designated terrorists, spoke of the importance of local tribes in combating ISIS.

6 On May 23, all detention centers in Diyala had been placed on maximum alert for security purposes. On May 24, a VBIED exploded at the intersection in al-Jawba area, north of Baquba, wounding three civilians. Meanwhile local IP disarmed a VBIED containing "more than 100 kg" of explosives in al-Minjara area, northeast of Baquba, and a VBIED exploded at the 5th Infantry Division headquarters, north of Baquba.

7 On May 24, ISIS severed roads leading to Haditha district and kidnapped local residents, adding that ISIS executed 19 tribal members on charges of supporting the ISF and resisting ISIS. ISIS also executed 16 "merchants" captured several days prior on the road between Haditha and Baiji. ISIS also claimed to have detonated two truck SVBIEDs "near Haditha" that resulted in casualties, but this report was not confirmed.

8 On May 24, ISIS reportedly attacked the Walid border crossing with two SVBIEDs, forcing ISF to withdraw from the area. Anbar border committee chairman Suad Jassim stated that ISIS controlled the Walid border crossing after security forces withdrew towards Trebil border crossing with Jordan.

9 On May 24, a Popular Mobilization Commission official in Basra stated that ten "Popular Mobilization" brigades consisting of "25,000" fighters went to Ramadi from Basra "recently" to participate in operations to retake the city and hold territory. According to the official five of the ten brigades belonged to the Badr Organization.



- Major Cities
- ⊗ Execution
- Anti-ISIS Iraqi Sunni Tribes
- ☒ SVBIED
- ✈ Airstrikes
- Iraqi Shi'a militias
- ☒ VBIED
- ✈ Iraqi Airstrikes
- ISF
- ☒ Major Clash
- ☒ Coalition
- ISIS

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ISIS continued its campaign for the Euphrates across following the fall of Ramadi, Iraq and Palmyra, Syria. In Anbar ISIS seized the Iraqi side of the Tanf/Waleed border crossing with Syria, having captured the Syrian side on May 22. ISIS has mounted complex, coordinated attacks involving multiple VBIEDs against ISF-controlled Haditha and Baghdadi, near al-Asad Airbase, forcing the ISF to allocate resources to these two locations rather than focusing on Habaniya and Ramadi. ISIS is thereby challenging an ISF advance on Ramadi from the west. This tactic will likely persist because ISIS lost ground east of Ramadi. The ISF, "Popular Mobilization", and tribal fighters recaptured Husayba over May 22-23, challenging the ISIS advance toward the Habaniya base. Iranian-backed Shi'a militias Kata'ib Hezbollah (KH) and the Nujaba Movement (NM) previously placed their members on alert for Anbar and Badr Organization leader Hadi al-Amiri was reportedly at the Habaniya base on May 16. Reports of "Popular Mobilization" forces in Habaniya likely include the deployment of Iranian-backed Shi'a militias. Anbar is not the only active front in Iraq. There have been reports of an increased Iranian presence and logistical support at Baiji following the ISF and "Popular Mobilization" advance on the refinery on May 22. Despite the possible Iranian presence, U.S.-led Coalition airstrikes continue in the area. The Iraqi government is prioritizing defense of Baghdad as the ISF and "Popular Mobilization" continue to clash with ISIS northeast and southeast of Fallujah. ISIS continues to try to disperse the ISF, conducting VBIED attacks in Diyala province, including on ISF targets. Local Diyala authorities placed prisons were put on high alert on May 23, indicating fears of ISIS attacks similar to the May 9 Khalis prison break.