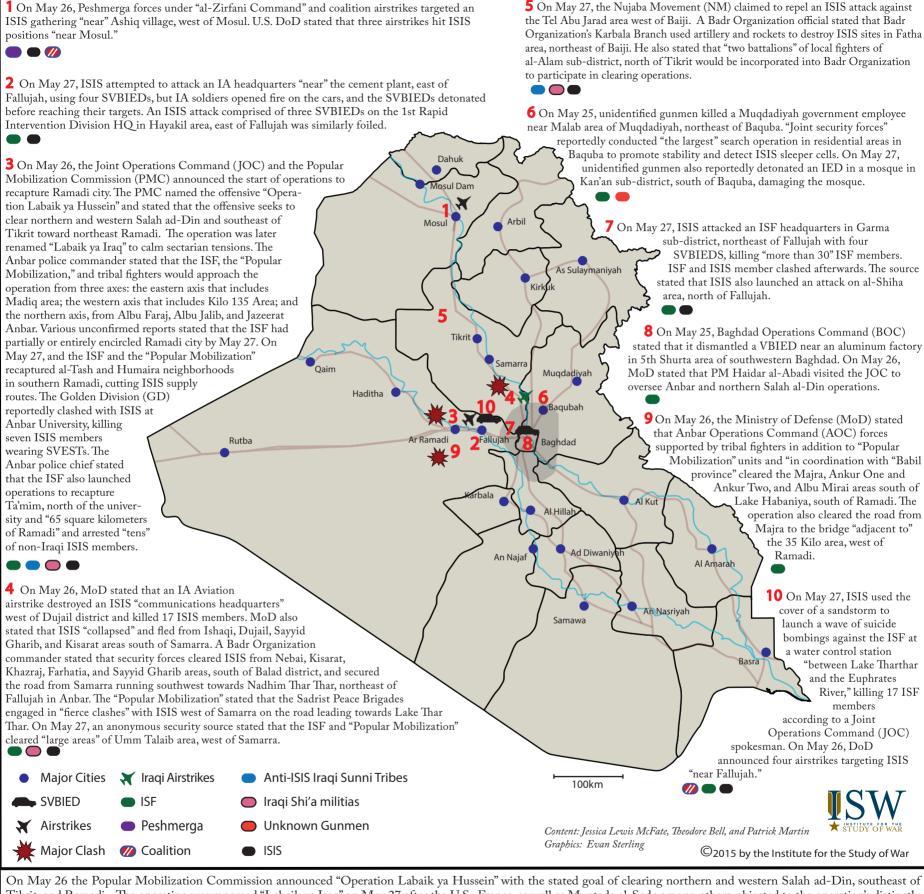
## Iraq Situation Report: May 26-27, 2015



On May 26 the Popular Mobilization Commission announced "Operation Labaik ya Hussein" with the stated goal of clearing northern and western Salah ad-Din, southeast of Tikrit, and Ramadi. The operation was renamed "Labaik ya Iraq" on May 27 after the U.S., France, as well as Muqtada al-Sadr, among others, objected to the operation's distinctly Shi'a name and questioned whether it was inclusive of all Iraqis. The Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), "Popular Mobilization", and tribal fighters advanced on May 27 into southern Ramadi, and the ISF is still contesting the al-Tash and Humeira neighborhoods as well as Anbar University. Unconfirmed reports assert that the ISF has encircled Ramadi on multiple fronts. ISIS's positions in southern Ramadi have been entrenched for many months, so its fortifications will likely be hardest to clear in that area. The ISF is also pressuring ISIS in northern Iraq. "Popular Mobilization" forces, including the Nujaba Movement (NM) and the Badr Organization, both Iranian-backed Shi'a militias, have continued to clash with ISIS in the vicinity of Baiji following recent ISF advances toward the refinery and amid U.S.-led Coalition airstrikes in the area. Badr Organization and Muqtada al-Sadr's "Peace Brigades" also reportedly made advances against ISIS south and west of Samarra in the direction of Fallujah, aligning with the stated "Popular Mobilization" goal of pushing southwest into Anbar. Clashes in the area will likely be frequent as the Thar Thar desert zone separating Samarra and Fallujah is a well-established ISIS stronghold from which ISIS projects attacks south of Samarra and into northwest Baghdad. ISIS meanwhile launched a wave of SVBIED attacks against ISF targets east and north of Fallujah that the ISF largely repelled. ISIS may be trying to block ISF and "Popular Mobilization" elements east of Fallujah from linking their operations in Salah ad Din to their operations in Ramadi.