

# Iraq Situation Report: May 26-27, 2015

**1** On May 26, Peshmerga forces under “al-Zirfani Command” and coalition airstrikes targeted an ISIS gathering “near” Ashiq village, west of Mosul. U.S. DoD stated that three airstrikes hit ISIS positions “near Mosul.”



**2** On May 27, ISIS attempted to attack an IA headquarters “near” the cement plant, east of Fallujah, using four SVBIEDs, but IA soldiers opened fire on the cars, and the SVBIEDs detonated before reaching their targets. An ISIS attack comprised of three SVBIEDs on the 1st Rapid Intervention Division HQ in Hayakil area, east of Fallujah was similarly foiled.



**3** On May 26, the Joint Operations Command (JOC) and the Popular Mobilization Commission (PMC) announced the start of operations to recapture Ramadi city. The PMC named the offensive “Operation Labaik ya Hussein” and stated that the offensive seeks to clear northern and western Salah ad-Din and southeast of Tikrit toward northeast Ramadi. The operation was later renamed “Labaik ya Iraq” to calm sectarian tensions. The Anbar police commander stated that the ISF, the “Popular Mobilization,” and tribal fighters would approach the operation from three axes: the eastern axis that includes Madiq area; the western axis that includes Kilo 135 Area; and the northern axis, from Albu Faraj, Albu Jalib, and Jazeerat Anbar. Various unconfirmed reports stated that the ISF had partially or entirely encircled Ramadi city by May 27. On May 27, and the ISF and the “Popular Mobilization” recaptured al-Tash and Humaira neighborhoods in southern Ramadi, cutting ISIS supply routes. The Golden Division (GD) reportedly clashed with ISIS at Anbar University, killing seven ISIS members wearing SVESTs. The Anbar police chief stated that the ISF also launched operations to recapture Ta'mim, north of the university and “65 square kilometers of Ramadi” and arrested “tens” of non-Iraqi ISIS members.



**4** On May 26, MoD stated that an IA Aviation airstrike destroyed an ISIS “communications headquarters” west of Dujail district and killed 17 ISIS members. MoD also stated that ISIS “collapsed” and fled from Ishaqi, Dujail, Sayyid Gharib, and Kisarat areas south of Samarra. A Badr Organization commander stated that security forces cleared ISIS from Nebai, Kisarat, Khazraj, Farhatia, and Sayyid Gharib areas, south of Balad district, and secured the road from Samarra running southwest towards Nadhim Thar Thar, northeast of Fallujah in Anbar. The “Popular Mobilization” stated that the Sadrist Peace Brigades engaged in “fierce clashes” with ISIS west of Samarra on the road leading towards Lake Thar Thar. On May 27, an anonymous security source stated that the ISF and “Popular Mobilization” cleared “large areas” of Umm Talaib area, west of Samarra.



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

**5** On May 27, the Nujaba Movement (NM) claimed to repel an ISIS attack against the Tel Abu Jarad area west of Baiji. A Badr Organization official stated that Badr Organization's Karbala Branch used artillery and rockets to destroy ISIS sites in Fatha area, northeast of Baiji. He also stated that “two battalions” of local fighters of al-Alam sub-district, north of Tikrit would be incorporated into Badr Organization to participate in clearing operations.



**6** On May 25, unidentified gunmen killed a Muqadiyah government employee near Malab area of Muqadiyah, northeast of Baquba. “Joint security forces” reportedly conducted “the largest” search operation in residential areas in Baquba to promote stability and detect ISIS sleeper cells. On May 27, unidentified gunmen also reportedly detonated an IED in a mosque in Kan'an sub-district, south of Baquba, damaging the mosque.



**7** On May 27, ISIS attacked an ISF headquarters in Garma sub-district, northeast of Fallujah with four SVBIEDS, killing “more than 30” ISF members. ISF and ISIS member clashed afterwards. The source stated that ISIS also launched an attack on al-Shiha area, north of Fallujah.



**8** On May 25, Baghdad Operations Command (BOC) stated that it dismantled a VBIED near an aluminum factory in 5th Shurta area of southwestern Baghdad. On May 26, MoD stated that PM Haidar al-Abadi visited the JOC to oversee Anbar and northern Salah al-Din operations.



**9** On May 26, the Ministry of Defense (MoD) stated that Anbar Operations Command (AOC) forces supported by tribal fighters in addition to “Popular Mobilization” units and “in coordination with “Babil province” cleared the Majra, Ankur One and Ankur Two, and Albu Mirai areas south of Lake Habaniya, south of Ramadi. The operation also cleared the road from Majra to the bridge “adjacent to” the 35 Kilo area, west of Ramadi.



**10** On May 27, ISIS used the cover of a sandstorm to launch a wave of suicide bombings against the ISF at a water control station “between Lake Tharthar and the Euphrates River,” killing 17 ISF members according to a Joint Operations Command (JOC) spokesman. On May 26, DoD announced four airstrikes targeting ISIS “near Fallujah.”



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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.