

1 Turkish-backed forces recapture village north of Mosul. Tribal fighters from former Ninewa Governor Atheel al-Nujaifi's National Mobilization, Peshmerga, and Turkish troops recaptured the village of Kanuna in Bashiqa District, northeast of Mosul, on May 14.

13 Joint force retakes Garma District. The ISF and Popular Mobilization retook Garma District on May 23, a historic hotbed for Sunni extremists and a staging area for ISIS attacks into Baghdad.

12 Heavy security forces conduct clearing operations in Diyala. Diyala received additional police from Wasit Province and two police battalions from Baghdad on May 14 to maintain security while security forces conducted anti-ISIS operations in western and southwestern Diyala. Popular Mobilization, the 5th IA Division, and police conducted raids against suspected ISIS hideouts amid the largest security presence in Diyala since 2008.

11 ISF operations attempt to secure Euphrates River Valley. The Jazeera and Badia Operations Command (JBOC) conducted clearing operations between Hit District and Baghdadi sub-district, west of Ramadi, on May 17. ISIS continues to maintain a presence in al-Dulab area, north of Baghdadi, as well as on the eastern side of the Euphrates River. The group continues to resist ISF attempts to clear Jubba sub-district, north of Baghdadi.

10 ISF recaptures al-Rutba District and its environs. The ISF with tribal fighters, local police, Coalition airstrikes, and a Hawza Popular Mobilization group recaptured Rutba District and its environs on May 19. The War Media Cell stated that the joint force now controls the entirety of the International Highway between Ramadi and the Jordanian-Iraqi Border Crossing at Trebil.

9 ISIS attacks ISF north of Ramadi, briefly seizing terrain. ISIS detonated an unconfirmed number of truck SVBIEDs on May 12 in Juraishi, north of Ramadi, killing at least 17 Iraqi Army soldiers. A security source stated that ISIS militants "surrounded an army regiment, seized a bridge, and cut a key supply route" between Ramadi and Thar Thar in order to prevent the ISF from severing ISIS's supply routes to Fallujah before reinforcements arrived and cleared the area.

8 ISIS attacks police station in Abu Ghraib. The Ministry of Interior reported that three SVEST attackers and gunmen, attempted to storm a police station in al-Zaidan in Abu Ghraib District, west of Baghdad on May 12. Security forces repelled the attack but the assault left at least one Iraqi Police (IP) member dead and four others wounded.

7 ISF announces start of Fallujah operation. PM Abadi announced the start of ground operations to recapture Fallujah on May 23, visiting the operation's headquarters while Defense Minister Khalid al-Obeidi visited an ISF headquarters north of Fallujah. The ISF and Popular Mobilization continued deploying forces to the Fallujah area, including "20,000" members of the "federal forces," according to the Federal Police commander. However, Inherent Resolve spokesperson Col. Steve Warren stated on May 13 that Mosul remains the priority and that there was "no military reason" to pursue Fallujah before Mosul.

2 ISIS attacks southern Salah al-Din. Three ISIS gunmen disguised as Popular Mobilization members opened fire on a cafe in Balad District, southeast of Samarra on May 12, killing 13 and wounding 25. The attackers fled, and one later detonated a Suicide Vest (SVEST) during an ISF clearing operation west of Balad, killing two Popular Mobilization members and two Federal Police members. A second SVEST attacker was found and killed before he could attack. The Federal Police also reported that four additional ISIS SVEST attackers were killed attempting to detonate explosives at a shrine in Balad. On May 21, an ISIS SVEST attacker on a motorcycle detonated his explosives near a police station in Dujail District, south of Balad, killing five people and wounding 20.

3 ISIS attacks Taji Gas Plant. ISIS carried out a complex attack on the Taji Gas Plant near Camp Taji, north of Baghdad, on May 15 in order to disrupt its operation and damage the facilities. ISIS detonated a Suicide Vehicle-Borne IED (SVBIED) at the gate of the plant before storming the facility with six SVEST attackers and another VBIED. The ISF killed the attackers, but three gas tanks were set on fire and at least 14 people were killed.

4 ISIS conducts spectacular attacks in Baghdad. Between May 11 and May 23, ISIS conducted a wave of spectacular attacks against civilian targets across Baghdad, including deadly attacks in northern Baghdad's Sadr City and Shaab areas on May 11 and May 17. At least three SVBIEDs, two VBIEDs, and one SVEST detonated in at least eight attacks, killing at least 144 people.

5 Sadrist protesters storm the Green Zone, clash with security forces. Thousands of Sadrists stormed the Green Zone on May 20 despite security forces attempting to prevent their entry by launching tear gas. Protesters stormed the buildings of the Council of Representatives, Council of Ministers, and PM Abadi's office before withdrawing under heavy attack from security forces. At least 89 people were wounded during the demonstration and three others killed. Federal Police deployed around the Green Zone and in Tahrir Square while the elite Golden Division secured the Green Zone and closed all entrances. Sadrist Trend leader Muqtada al-Sadr praised the "spontaneous peaceful revolt" while PM Abadi condemned the protests as "unacceptable."

Smaller Sadrist demonstrations broke out across southern Iraq. Demonstrators attempted to storm the Dhi Qar and Basra provincial council buildings and unidentified gunmen fired at the Badr Organization headquarters in Amarah, Maysan.

6 Security forces reorganize, shuffle forces. Security

operation commands in Basra, Diyala, Muthanna, and Babil Provinces significantly increased security measures in response to increased attacks in and around Baghdad. An armored force deployed to northern Basra on May 17 to contain tribal conflicts. The Diwaniyah Provincial Council requested that the Interior Ministry stop transferring Federal Police forces out of the province towards Anbar due to the uptick of ISIS attacks in southern Iraq.



- Major Cities
- Coalition
- Peshmerga
- Turkey
- SVBIED
- Major Clash
- ISF
- Anti-ISIS Iraqi Sunni Tribes
- VBIED
- Volunteers
- ISIS
- Iraqi Shi'a Militias
- Failed S/VBIED
- Demonstration
- SVEST
- Airstrikes

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The Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), Popular Mobilization, and tribal fighters launched a major operation to retake Fallujah on May 23. The joint force quickly recaptured northern terrain on the first day, including Garma District, a historic hotbed for Sunni extremists including ISIS's predecessor Al Qaeda in Iraq. The joint force continued to consolidate surrounding terrain on May 24 as it advances towards central Fallujah. Security concerns, already heightened by an increase of ISIS attacks in Baghdad, could intensify as the Fallujah operation increases the likelihood of sectarian violence. The ISF must ensure that civilians fleeing Fallujah are not exposed to sectarian violence from Iranian-backed Iraqi Shi'a militias both during and after the operation.

Baghdad's political and physical security are facing grave threats from ISIS, the Sadrist demonstrators, and Iraq's own politicians. Sadrist demonstrators stormed the Green Zone on May 20 and broke into major government buildings, including the facilities housing the Council of Ministers (CoM), Council of Representatives (CoR), and Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi's office, before Interior Ministry security forces ejected protestors. The chaos follows a significant increase in ISIS activity in Baghdad and the Baghdad Belts. Deadly attacks targeted civilians in northern Baghdad on May 11 and 17, prompting the Sadrist militia Saraya al-Salaam to briefly deploy across Baghdad's Shi'a neighborhoods before Sadr ordered their withdrawal on May 18. ISIS's activity is significantly increasing in Baghdad's northern Belts area. The group launched spectacular attacks in the districts of Balad on May 12 and 13 and Dujail on May 21, and carried out a large attack aimed at damaging the Taji Gas Plant near Camp Taji on May 15. Increased ISIS activity in the northern Belts and Baghdad could deteriorate the security situation to levels not seen since late 2014.

The deadly attacks indicate that ISIS is taking advantage of Iraq's unstable political situation. ISIS has demonstrated intent to both exacerbate sectarian tensions and increase the possibility of intra-Shi'a conflict; its attacks have generated friction between the Sadrists, rival Iranian-backed proxy militias, and the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). The Sadrists are exacerbating tensions by putting thousands of unruly demonstrators out on the streets against Iranian proxy militia forces and units from the Interior Ministry, controlled by the rival Badr Organization, who have little interest in seeing the Sadrists succeed. ISIS will have opportunities to increase its attack capabilities while the ISF and the Popular Mobilization are engaged in operations on multiple fronts, including recent successful operations which regained control over Rutba District on May 19 and the Ramadi-Jordan highway on May 20. However, both the ISF and Popular mobilization have also committed significant forces towards completing the encirclement of Fallujah and clearing ISIS from western Diyala Province. These efforts have required further forward deployments of Baghdad and southern-based security forces away from their bases in southern Iraq. Forces shifting in southern Iraq leaves the area vulnerable to a resurgence in ISIS attacks and opens avenues for ISIS to launch attacks into Baghdad from the South.