During his current visit to Washington, the president of Iraqi Kurdistan, Masoud Barzani reiterated his desire for an independent Kurdistan. Similarly, the U.S. reiterated its desire for a “united, federal, and democratic Iraq,” signaling that it does not support Kurdish autonomy. The positions expressed by President Barzani and the U.S. are not new, but political competition inside in Iraqi Kurdistan is accelerating, given that Barzani’s term extension will expire on August 19, 2015. The prospect of a new presidential term is igniting political dissent from the opposition, especially from relatively new political players such as Gorran [Change] that performed well in the latest elections. The rise of the opposition now constrains the KDP and PUK, which had dominated Iraqi Kurdish politics in the past. Despite the fact that Kurdish political tension declined after the fall of Mosul to ISIS, threats from the opposition, especially from relatively new political players such as Gorran [Change] has five, the PUK has three, and the remaining seats were distributed among other parties.

On May 4, a source stated that a coalition air strike targeted ISIS at the Milih airport between Hawija and Fatha areas, southwest of Kirkuk City, killing 25 ISIS members and destroying eight vehicles.

On May 5, media secretary of Iraqi Kurdistan’s parliament, Tariq Jawhar, stated that the committee tasked with editing the constitution of the state of Iraq was formed and that it is composed of 21 members from the parliament based on the allocations of seats. The KDP has seven members, Gorran [Change] has five, the PUK has three, and the remaining seats were distributed among other parties.

On May 4, a Salah al-Din security source stated that ISIS attacked a “Popular Mobilization” checkpoint in Sayyid Gharib, south of Balad. “Popular Mobilization” members repelled the attack, destroying a vehicle outfitted with a heavy machine gun while suffering one member wounded. On May 5, an IED targeted a Popular Mobilization patrol “near Balad,” killing one patrol member and wounding four others.

On May 6, Anbar provincial council member Mizhir Hassan stated that a joint committee of the local and central governments and “U.S. forces” was formed to oversee the arming and equipping of 1,000 Anbar tribal fighters from various tribes” at Habaniya base, east of Ramadi, according to guidelines and conditions set by the committee.

On May 6, a source stated that coalition airstrike fighters near Ramadi General Hospital, in northeastern Ramadi, that “security forces” have used as a base for the past three weeks, setting the fourth floor ablaze. The DoD stated that a coalition air strike targeted ISIS near Baiji, and the road leading to the refinery. IA Aviation continued airstrikes near the refinery. On May 5, the commander of Salah ad-Din Operations Command (SDOC) stated that no “security forces” were besieged at the refinery. A security source stated that a joint force of IA, IP, “Popular Mobilization,” ISOF, and the “Presidential” Brigade cleared the road between the refinery and Mazzra, south of Baiji, killing 35 ISIS fighters. In addition, 150 members of Kata’ib al-Imam Ali reportedly broke a “siege” and reinforced the refinery. An FP force killed three ISIS attackers wearing SVESTs and destroyed a VBIED near the refinery. The DoD stated that between May 4 and 6, 15 airstrikes targeted ISIS “near Baiji”. On May 6, however, a DoD spokesperson stated that the refinery situation was “fluid” but that it was “flowing in the wrong direction.”

On May 7, a Diyala security source stated that “security forces” found four bodies of truck drivers with gunshot wounds in the area between the Imam Wayes and the Naft Khana areas, east of Muqdadiyah. He added that their trucks were set ablaze. Shortly after this report, Diyala security committee member Zahid al-Dalwi stated that ISIS burned three trucks at a fake checkpoint in Zalaw area near Naft Khana in what he described as “the second attack of its kind in one week.”

On May 6, a security source stated that a Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Device (VBIED) targeted the office of Kata’ib Imam Ali, an Iranian-backed Shia militia, in al-Rasat neighborhood in central Baghdad, killing two and injuring six others. Later, a security source stated that two Katyusha rockets landed near the Celebrations Square in the Green Zone, without reporting any casualties.