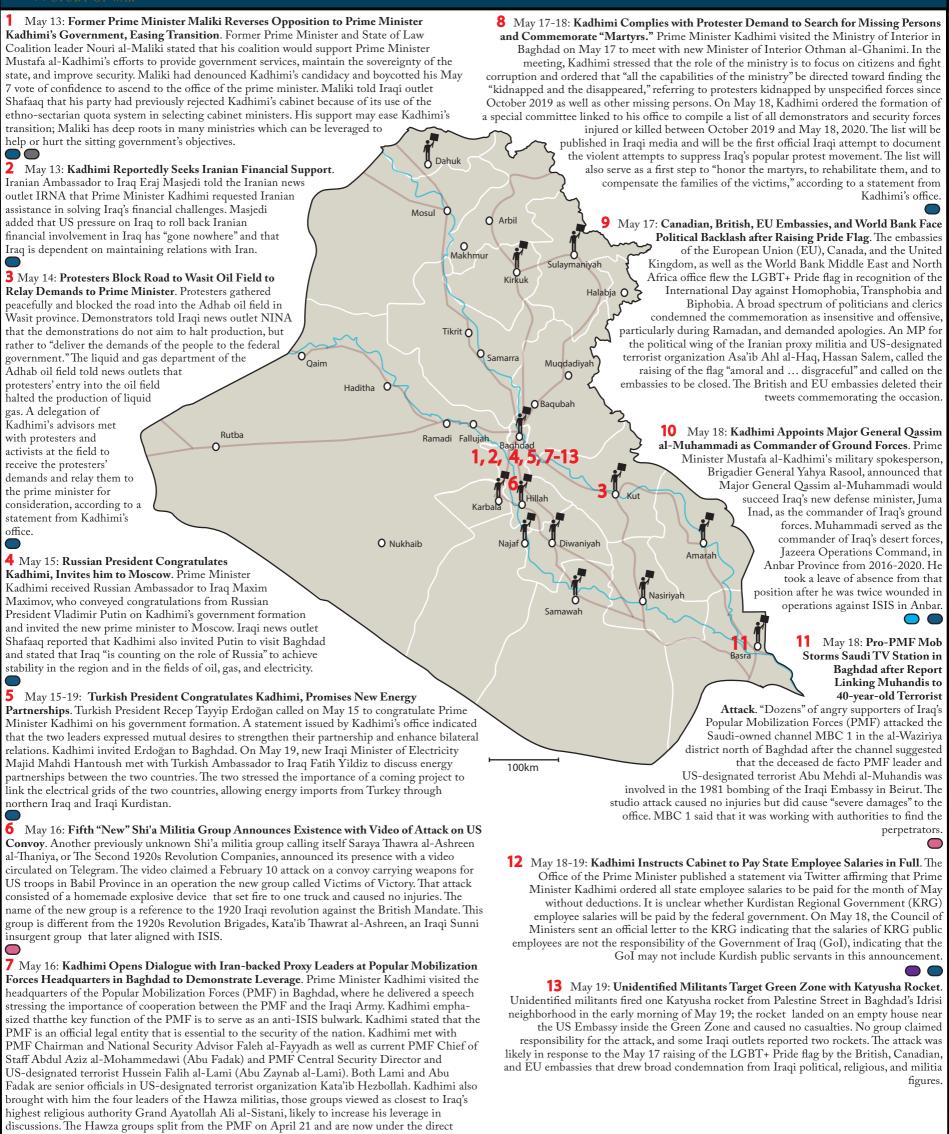


Iraq Situation Report: May 13 - 19, 2020



Key Takeaway: New Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi seeks to balance a variety of opposing forces in Iraq. After a week of executive orders and appointments generally viewed as favorable to the United States, Kadhimi called the Iranian-dominated Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) heroes who are essential to the anti-ISIS fight in a visit to PMF headquarters. Kadhimi needs to maintain his ties with the PMF and Iran's proxies in Iraq to prevent militia-led civil unrest and ultimately state collapse. However, Kadhimi also made a point of showcasing his leverage over the PMF by bringing with him the leaders of militias that defected from the PMF in April. Those defections risked organizational fracturing and offended PMF leadership which remains under Iranian, rather than Iraqi, government control. Iran continues to work to demonstrate its influence over Iraqi affairs in other areas; the Iranian ambassador told Iranian media that Kadhimi asked for financial aid from Iran and said that Iraq

remains "dependent" on Iran for financial support despite US pressure to sever those ties.

ISIS

Iran

command of the prime minister. The secession of the Hawza groups aggravated the Iran-backed

Iraqi Security Forces

Anti-ISIS Coalition

PMF leadership, which fears that more groups will leave the PMF.

Major Cities

Demonstration

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To learn more about the situation in Iraq and other international issues, see ISW's new podcast, Overwatch, available on Spotify, Sticher, iTunes, and all your favorite podcast apps.

Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG)

Iraqi Council of Representatives



Graphic by Katherine Lawlor and

Brandon Wallace

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