May 13: Former Prime Minister Maliki Reverses Opposition to Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi’s Government, Offers to Support Iraq to Daesh, and Commemorate “Martyrs.” Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi visited the Ministry of Interior in Baghdad and met with new Interior Minister Othman al-Ghanimi. In the meeting, Al-Kadhimi stressed that the role of the ministry is to focus on citizens and fight corruption, in line with the capabilities of the ministry “be directed toward finding the ‘killed and the disappeared,’” referring to protesters kidnapped by unspecified forces since October 2019 as well as other missing persons. On May 18, Al-Kadhimi ordered the formation of a special committee linked to his office to compile a list of all demonstrators and security forces injured or killed between October 2019 and May 2020. The list will be published in Iraqi media and will be the first official Iraqi attempt to document the violent attempts to suppress Iraq’s popular protest movement. The list will also serve as a first step to “honor the martyrs, to rehabilitate them, and to compensate the families of the victims,” according to a statement from Al-Kadhimi’s office.

May 15: Russian President Congratulates Al-Kadhimi, Invites him to Moscow. Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi’s office said that Al-Kadhimi will visit Moscow and meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin on May 15 to congratulate him on his government’s formation. A statement issued by Kadhimi’s office indicated that Russian leaders expressed mutual desires to strengthen partnership and enhance bilateral relations. Kadhimi invited Erdogan to Baghdad. On May 19, new Iraqi Minister of Electricity Majid Malaki Hantoush met with Turkish Ambassador to Iraq Fatih Yildiz to discuss energy co-operation and to link the electrical grids of the two countries, allowing energy imports from Turkey through northern Iraq and Kuwait.

May 16: Fifth “New” Shia Militia Group Announces Presence with Video of Attack on US Consulate. Another previously unknown Shia militia group calling itself Saraya Thawra Al-Ashreen al-Thaniya, or the Second 1920s Revolution Companies, announced its presence with a video circulated on Telegram. The video claimed a February 10 attack on a convoy carrying weapons for al-Tahrir, or the Second 1920s Revolution Companies, and a video of an attack on the US Embassy inside the Green Zone and caused no casualties. No group claimed responsibility for the attack.

May 17-18: Al-Kadhimi Complies with Protester Demand to Search for Missing Persons and Emmemorates “Martyrs.” Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi visited the Ministry of Interior in Baghdad on May 17 to meet with new Interior Minister Othman al-Ghanimi. In the meeting, Al-Kadhimi stressed that the role of the ministry is to focus on citizens and fight corruption, and ordered that the capabilities of the ministry “be directed toward finding the ‘killed and disappeared,’” referring to protesters kidnapped by unspecified forces since October 2019 as well as other missing persons. On May 18, Al-Kadhimi ordered the formation of a special committee linked to his office to compile a list of all demonstrators and security forces injured or killed between October 2019 and May 2020. The list will be published in Iraqi media and will be the first official Iraqi attempt to document the violent attempts to suppress Iraq’s popular protest movement. The list will also serve as a first step to “honor the martyrs, to rehabilitate them, and to compensate the families of the victims,” according to a statement from Al-Kadhimi’s office.

May 18: Kanjihi Appoints Major General Qassem al-Mahmodi as Commander of Ground Forces. Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi appointed Major General Qassem al-Mahmodi as Commander of Ground Forces, which is the main army force in Iraq. Al-Kadhimi’s office said that Al-Mahmodi will succeed Iraq’s new defense minister, Juma Isad, as the commander of Iraq’s ground forces. Al-Mahmodi is a senior officer in the Iraqi army and had served as the commander of Iraq’s desert forces.

May 18-19: Al-Kadhimi Instructs Cabinet to Pay State Employee Salaries in Full. The Office of the Prime Minister published a statement via Twitter affirming that Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi ordered all state employee salaries to be paid for the month of May without deductions. It is unclear whether Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) employees will be paid by the federal government. A spokesman for the commander of Iraq’s desert forces, Gen. Muhammad al-Saadi, said that the statement was not a formal order to the KRG. It said that the salaries of KRG public employees are not the responsibility of the Government of Iraq (GoI), indicating that the GoI may not include Kurdish public servants in this announcement.

May 19: Unidentified Militants Target Green Zone with Katyusha Rocket. Unidentified militants fired one Katyusha rocket from Palestine Street in Baghdad’s al-Radwa neighborhood in the early morning of May 19, the rocket landed on an empty house near the US Embassy inside the Green Zone and caused no casualties. No group claimed responsibility for the attack and, as some Iraqi outlets reported two rockets. The attack killed 3 civilians and wounded 10. The attack was likely in response to the May 17 raising of the LGBT+ Pride flag by the British, Canadian, and EU embassies in Baghdad, which are all recognized by the United Nations as “safe spaces” for LGBTQ+ individuals. The attack was also likely in response to media reports that the US has offered to supply advanced technology to the Iraqi government.

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