

# The Liberation of Fallujah, the Fall of Baghdad

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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Michael Knights is the Jill and Jay Bernstein Fellow of The Washington Institute, specializing in the military and security affairs of Iraq, Iran, and the Persian Gulf states. He is a co-founder of the Militia Spotlight platform, which offers in-depth analysis of developments related to the Iranian-backed militias in Iraq and Syria.



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## Securing the Iraqi capital won't be easy, but keeping Baghdad safe from the Islamic State is the only way to ensure it doesn't fall to Shiite militias.

**W**hat does it matter if we liberate Fallujah but, in the process, see Baghdad devolve into sectarian chaos and militia rule? That's the question vexing Iraqi and coalition decision-makers in the wake of a spate of recent bombings in the nation's capital and Shiite south.

The numbers speak for themselves. The self-styled Islamic State claimed on May 18 that it had killed 522 Iraqis in the Baghdad area over the last month, almost all of them civilians. The militant group proudly boasted of achieving this feat with 15 suicide vests and six vehicle-borne bombs. Massive bombings of Shiite civilian areas in Baghdad on May 11 and May 17 accounted for roughly 200 of those deaths and wounded hundreds more...

**[Read the Full Article on the Foreign Policy Website \(http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/05/23/the-liberation-of-fallujah-the-fall-of-baghdad/?](http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/05/23/the-liberation-of-fallujah-the-fall-of-baghdad/?utm_content=bufferf84ba&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer)**

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