

# Iraqi forces launch anti-Daesh operation north of Baghdad

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Sat, 2019-07-20 17:11

BAGHDAD: Iraq's military said Saturday its troops in partnership with security agencies and paramilitary forces launched the second phase of an operation aimed at clearing remnants of the Daesh group from north of Baghdad and surrounding areas.

This is the second phase of the operation dubbed "Will to Victory," which started two weeks earlier and targeted the area along the border with Syria. The military said the new target area is north of Baghdad and in the Diyala, Salahuddin and Anbar provinces.

Although Iraq declared victory against Daesh in July 2017, the extremists have turned into an insurgency and continue to carry out deadly attacks in the country.

The military said Iraqi troops, Iran-backed Popular Mobilization Forces, the federal police and others are taking part in the operation supported by the Iraqis and the U.S.-led international coalition.

On Saturday, Iraq's Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi visited the operation room alongside the deputy head of the PMF, Abu Mahdi Al-Muhandis.

Earlier this month, the Iraqi government moved to place the Iranian-backed militias under the command of the armed forces. The move was believed to be an attempt to curb the powerful militias, particularly amid rising tension between Iran and the US, the power brokers in Iraq.

The mainly Shiite PMF have been an effective force against Daesh and are a significant political force, with government ministers and 48 seats in the 329-member parliament.



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## [British Airways suspends flights to Cairo for seven days](#)

Sat, 2019-07-20 19:44

LONDON: British Airways suspended flights to Cairo for seven days starting Saturday as a precaution to allow for an assessment of security there, the airline said in a statement.

"We constantly review our security arrangements at all our airports around the world, and have suspended flights to Cairo for seven days as a precaution to allow for further assessment," the statement said.



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## [Iran forces Algerian tanker into its waters](#)

Sat, 2019-07-20 18:17

LONDON: The Iranian coast guard forced an Algerian tanker to head into Iranian waters on Friday before a confrontation ended, the Algerian state oil and gas company Sonatrach said.

Algeria's state-run news agency APS, quoting Sonatrach, said Saturday the empty tanker "MESDAR" was forced into Iranian waters Friday night as it moved through the Strait of Hormuz.

An emergency hotline between Algeria's energy and foreign ministries was quickly put into place and the incident concluded an hour and 15 minutes later. APS quoted Sonatrach as saying that "no human or material incident was

registered.”

It said that the tanker was heading to Tanura in Saudi Arabia to onload oil for the Chinese company UNIPEC when it was forced into Iranian territorial waters.



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## [Iraq Kurds arrest two suspects in killing of Turkish vice consul](#)

Sat, 2019-07-20 16:27

ERBIL: Iraqi Kurdish authorities announced Saturday they had arrested two suspects involved in the murder of three people, including a Turkish

diplomat, in the regional capital Erbil this week.

The autonomous region's security council first said its counterterrorism unit had arrested "the main perpetrator" Mazloun Dag, a 27-year-old from Turkey's Diyarbakir region.

The council had put out a wanted notice for Dag a day earlier in connection to Wednesday's killing of Turkish Vice Consul Osman Kose and two Iraqi nationals.

It later announced it had also arrested Mohammad Biskesiz, identifying him as "one of the accomplices of Mazloun Dag".

It did not specify Biskesiz's nationality or whether he was apprehended with Dag or separately.

Turkey's Anadolu state news agency said Dag is the brother of Dersim Dag, a member of Turkey's main pro-Kurdish party, the People's Democratic Party (HDP).

The HDP, the country's second largest opposition group, is regularly accused by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of links to Turkey's outlawed separatist Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

The HDP "strongly" condemned the Erbil attack, calling it an "absolutely unacceptable provocation attempt".

It also slammed the accusation that one of its deputies was "designated as a target because of his brother", without mentioning any names.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attack, but Ankara on Thursday launched a "comprehensive air operation" against the PKK in Iraqi Kurdistan's Qandil mountain area.

Since May, Turkey has been conducting a ground offensive and bombing campaign against Qandil to root out the PKK, considered a "terror organisation" by Ankara for its three-decade insurgency against the Turkish state.

Other air strikes Thursday night targeted "PKK bases and members" in the Makhmur area south of Iraq's northern city of Mosul, wounding two in a displacement camp, local sources told AFP.

The attack on Wednesday saw at least one gunman with two pistols fire on a group of diplomats in a restaurant in Erbil.

Kose and one Iraqi died Wednesday, while the second Iraqi succumbed to his wounds overnight.



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Death toll rises in attack on Turkish diplomat in Iraq Turkish diplomat and two others killed in northern Iraq restaurant attack

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## [Saudi Arabia sends crew member of Iranian ship to Oman](#)

Sat, 2019-07-20 16:01

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia sent a crew member of an Iranian ship to Oman on Saturday.

The sailor had previously been evacuated from the ship off the Yemeni port of Hodeidah for medical reasons.

After receiving necessary medical treatment in Jazan, the Iranian citizen was sent to Oman after Saudi Arabia received an Iranian request through the Swiss embassy in Riyadh, Saudi Press Agency reported.

Saudi Arabia said in June it had evacuated a crew member for medical reasons from a "suspect" Iranian ship – "Safiz" – northwest of Hodeidah after Riyadh

received a request for help from Tehran.



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