

# Pentagon mulling request for 5,000 more US troops to Middle East -Reuters

Thu, 2019-05-23 00:37

– Developing story.



Main category:  
[Middle-East](#)

---

## Daesh revival in Iraq must be prevented, says UN envoy

Wed, 2019-05-22 23:50

NEW YORK: The UN envoy for Iraq called on Tuesday for “wide-based international support” to prevent Daesh militants from regaining a foothold in the country.

Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert also told the Security Council that if the issue of thousands of returning Daesh militants and their families from Syria to Iraq is not managed properly “we risk creating a new breeding ground for the next generation of terrorists.”

She stressed that this “is not just an Iraqi problem” because there are non-Iraqi fighters as well, and she implicitly criticized some unnamed countries that are maintaining a “strategic distance” from their own nationals.

Daesh, which seized Iraqi cities and declared a proto-state in a large swathe of territory it took control of in Syria and Iraq in 2014, was formally declared defeated in Iraq in 2017 following a three-year bloody battle that left tens of thousands dead and Iraqi cities in ruins. But the group’s sleeper cells continue to launch attacks in different parts of Iraq.

Hennis-Plasschaert said that on an encouraging note the capital Baghdad “is opening up” and “very soon” the high-security Green Zone where many government offices and embassies are located “will no longer exist.” But she said the security situation in the capital and throughout the country will require close monitoring because the threat from Daesh “is still out there.”

The UN envoy quoted an unnamed representative of the US-led coalition in the country as saying recently that Daesh “is resurging. They rested, moved and are active.”

Hennis-Plasschaert said “another dominant security concern” is “armed actors”

operating outside the government who are engaged in illegal or criminal activities which undermine state authority, weaken the economy and prevent the return of thousands of displaced people.

She briefed the Security Council after it unanimously adopted a resolution extending the mandate of the UN political mission in Iraq that she leads until May 31, 2020.

More broadly, Hennis-Plasschaert also criticized political infighting in Iraq that has blocked key ministerial appointments a year after national elections, and corruption which is "pervasive at all levels in Iraq."

She alluded to escalating tensions between the US and Iran which have raised concerns that Iraq could once again get caught in the middle, just as it is on the path to recovery.

The country hosts more than 5,000 US troops, and is home to powerful Iranian-backed militias, some of whom want those US forces to leave.

Hennis-Plasschaert said she was pleased to report that Iraq's leaders continue to reach out to their regional and international counterparts, positioning the country "as a reliable partner."

"Iraq could well be a stabilizing factor in a turbulent region and instead of an arena for conflict, Iraq could well offer a space for regional reconciliation, preparing the ground for a regional security dialogue," she said.

"At the same time, we cannot ignore that Iraq faces serious challenges in preventing its territory from becoming the theater for different competitions," Hennis-Plasschaert said. "So, to all those feeling challenged: Placing a further burden on Iraq is truly, the last thing it needs."



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Daesh](#)

[Iraq](#)

[UN envoy](#)

Displaced by Daesh, Iraqi soccer star now off to the Olympics  
Iraq's local start-ups that are helping to rebuild a nation

---

## [Car bomb in Mogadishu leaves 6 dead, many wounded](#)

Wed, 2019-05-22 23:19

MOGADISHU: A car bomb exploded at a checkpoint near the presidential palace in the Somali capital Mogadishu on Wednesday, killing at least six people and wounding 12 others, a Somalia police spokesman said.

The deadly incident occurred as soldiers were conducting security checks on vehicles on the main road.

Capt. Mohamed Hussein said most of the casualties are soldiers and more than 13 people were injured.

The bombing was claimed by Somalia's Al-Shabab militant group, which said in

a statement it had targeted a convoy escorting government officials and lawmakers heading to the presidential palace.

"A car bomb blast struck at a checkpoint near Daljirka, there are some casualties including members of the security forces," said security official Abdukadir Ahmed after the attack in the south of the city.

Abdikadir Abdirahman, director of Aamin ambulance service earlier told AFP two people were killed and 12 others wounded in the blast.

## **FASTFACT**

**The bombing was claimed by Somalia's Al-Shabab militant group, which said in a statement it had targeted a convoy escorting government officials and lawmakers heading to the presidential palace.**

Other witnesses said they had seen three killed.

"I saw the bodies of three people among them a military woman," said witness Mohamed Saney.

"Several vehicles were destroyed in the blast and ambulances rushed to the scene to collect wounded people."

Al-Shabab militants have been fighting for more than a decade to topple the government.

Al-Shabab frequently carries out bomb blasts in the capital near the presidential compound and at hotels frequented by government officials and foreigners. They fled positions they once held in Mogadishu in 2011, and have since lost many of their strongholds.

But they retain control of large rural swathes of the country, and continue to wage a guerrilla war against the authorities.





Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Somalia](#)

[Mogadishu](#)

[Al-Shabab](#)

Somalia making progress but 'must tackle extremism' Millions hungry as drought grips Somalia

---

## [Netanyahu's July hearing on possible indictment delayed to October](#)

Author:

Wed, 2019-05-22 23:06

JERUSALEM: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu received on Wednesday a three-month delay, until October, for a hearing to argue against the attorney-general's plan to indict him on graft charges.

Netanyahu's attorneys had requested a postponement until May 2020 to give them more time to examine the evidence in three corruption cases, in which he denies wrongdoing, Attorney-General Avichai Mandelblit's office said.

In a letter to one of Netanyahu's lawyers that was released to the media, Mandelblit said he was shifting the dates for the hearing from July to Oct.

2-3.

He said a longer delay to a year from now would have “harmed the vital public interest in deciding as soon as possible” whether to issue an indictment.

In office for the past decade, Netanyahu won a fifth term in April despite an announcement by Mandelblit in February that he intended to charge him with fraud and bribery, pending a hearing with the attorney-general.

Expecting legal challenges, they also have been advocating legislation that would annul any Supreme Court ruling rescinding immunity.

Opposition legislators have described any attempt to shield Netanyahu or put limitations on Israel’s highest court as threats to Israeli democracy.

Set to become Israel’s longest-serving prime minister in July, the right-wing leader has called the allegations a political witch-hunt and said he has no intention of resigning if charged, with a renewed public mandate to govern.

Netanyahu, who formally heads an interim administration, is trying to put together a new coalition with right-wing, ultranationalist and ultra-Orthodox parties that would give him control of 65 of Parliament’s 120 seats.

Under law, he has until May 29 to inform President Reuven Rivlin that he has formed a new government. If he fails – which political commentators say is unlikely – Rivlin can ask another party leader to try.

With a new Parliament already sworn in, members of Netanyahu’s Likud party have said they will work toward granting him parliamentary immunity from prosecution while he serves as prime minister.

Postponing the hearing with Mandelblit could take some of the pressure off Netanyahu’s loyalists to rush immunity moves through parliament in the initial days of a new government.

In one of the investigations against him, Netanyahu is suspected of wrongfully receiving gifts, including champagne and cigars, from wealthy businessmen.

In a second case, he is alleged to have negotiated a deal with the owner of Israel’s best-selling daily newspaper, Yedioth Ahronoth, for better coverage in return for legislation that would slow the growth of a rival daily newspaper.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Benjamin Netanyahu](#)

[Israel](#)

[Jerusalem](#)

Anger over Netanyahu pledge to annex illegal settlementsIsrael eases Gaza fishing restrictions after truce

---

## [Deposed Istanbul mayor blasts ‘lies’ used to annul election](#)

Author:

Wed, 2019-05-22 22:57

ISTANBUL: Istanbul's deposed mayor Ekrem Imamoglu said on Wednesday that no one believed the "lies" used to overturn his recent election and called on voters to "correct this great shame" in next month's re-run.

"Nobody believes their claims," Imamoglu said at a meeting in Istanbul to launch his re-election campaign.

He accused President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's ruling party of peddling "lies" and "excuses" to overturn his narrow victory in the mayoral election in March.

"When I look at their facial expressions, I see that they themselves do not believe them either," Imamoglu said. The election board earlier this month accepted the ruling party's allegations of "irregularities" and called a re-run of the vote for June 23.

Imamoglu's victory for the opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) was the first time Erdogan's party and its predecessors had lost control of the metropolis in 25 years.

Analysts say the government is reluctant to cede control of Turkey's biggest city, which provides its mayor with significant resources for patronage as well as a high-profile platform.

"We will show the whole of Turkey on June 23 that there is no way out other than democracy and the ballot box," Imamoglu said.

"Come and let's correct this great shame and unfairness all together."

Imamoglu said his campaign would focus on reversing extravagant spending in the city's finances which he said he discovered during his brief 18-day stint as mayor.

"The resources of Istanbul municipality are being plundered ... Istanbul municipality is not the property of a handful of people," he said.

The opposition candidate also accused the ruling party of copying his proposals, including reduced water bills and discounted student transport, saying it was like a schoolboy copying his homework.

But he sought to maintain a positive message, in line with his efforts to bring unity to Turkey's fiercely partisan politics.

"We will embrace everyone ... Everyone is a patriot ... You will see at the end of this process we will love each other more."

The election board was due to release its full explanation for canceling the results of the first election.

It did not annul the votes for the city council that were cast at the same time, and where the majority of seats went to Erdogan's ruling Justice and Development Party.





Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Istanbul](#)

[Ekrem Imamoglu](#)

[Turkey](#)

[Recep Tayyip Erdogan](#)

[CHP](#)

CNN Turk criticized for cutting opposition mayor interview  
Turkey ruling party veterans criticize Istanbul vote re-run