
IRAQI OFFICIAL SEEKS MORE AID AHEAD OF MOSUL OFFENSIVE

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Though there is still no date for the long-awaited government offensive to retake Mosul, Iraq's foreign Minister said Tuesday that a third round of international assistance is urgently needed to help Iraq liberate its people from the Islamic States grip.

In addition to opening borders for Iraqi refugees and providing military assistance, the international community must help Iraq stabilize the ground it wins back from the Islamic State, Iraqi Foreign Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari said during a Washington visit.

We need to achieve victory in Mosul, but we should prepare for the post-liberation era. This is not only a national responsibility but an international responsibility to cut the range of time, start the third term of this campaign, and consider how to reconstruct the city, Mr. al-Jaafari said.

Dozens of defense and foreign ministers will meet in Washington on Wednesday for a pledging conference, where 24 countries are expected to make financial commitments focused on humanitarian assistance, mine removal and stabilization programs. The Obama administration expects to raise at least \$2 billion from governments around the world, according to the State Department.

The United Nations is preparing to make its largest humanitarian relief operation of the year to provide shelter, sanitation, food and water for three to 12 months after Mosul, Iraq's second largest city, is liberated.

U.S. and private military analysts say Islamic State has over half the land it controlled in Iraq in recent months — including Fallujah, which was recaptured last month. Now, government forces have focused in on Mosul, a city controlled by the Islamic State for almost three years.

Last week, Iraqi troops backed by U.S.-led airstrikes recaptured the Qayara air base just 40 miles south of Mosul. The base will be used as a staging ground for future operations.

Leaders know that recapturing Mosul will be a huge challenge, and that stabilizing the northern city afterward won't be easy, either.

Mosul is home to a mixture of Sunni Arabs, Kurds, Turkmen and others. Mr. al-Jaafari said the Iraqi government will work hard to ensure these differences do not breed more turmoil in the city.

But before that, the government must reconstruct the city and bring back the 3.3 million Iraqis who have been displaced since the Islamic State began expanding its territory in the nation,

according to the State Department.

We cannot ask the people to come back to their city while there are no hospitals or public schools for them. These are basic services that must be provided, Mr. al-Jaafari said.

The foreign ministers U.S. visit comes less than a week after a terrorist attack in Nice, France killed 84 civilians on Bastille Day, and two weeks after terrorists killed 36 people in the Istanbul airport. Mr. al-Jaafari said conquering the Islamic State bastion in Mosul will be a global victory.

Iraq is not only defending itself, but defending the whole world, he said. And the whole world should feel proud and happy for the success Iraq has had.

Kaynak/Source: