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## **IRAQ RECEIVES A NEW BATCH OF F-16 FIGHTER JETS FROM US**

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Baghdad: Iraqi air force has received a new batch of F-16 Fighting Falcon aircraft from the United States, bolstering the countrys fledging air force amid more than two years of fighting with the Daesh group, a spokesman said Monday as attacks in and near Baghdad killed six people.

Defence Ministrys spokesman, Brig. Gen. Tahseen Ebrahim, told The Associated Press that the new batch consisted of four fighter jets. Ebraim did not give more details or say when the next shipment will be delivered.

With the new arrivals, Iraq has now eight F16s in service, out of 36 fighter jets the US agreed to sell to Baghdad.

Also Monday, a bomb went off at an outdoor market in the town of Youssifiyah, 20 kilometres south of Baghdad, killing four shoppers and wounding 11, a police officer said.

Two more civilians were killed in another bomb explosion in a commercial area in Baghdads western Eskin neighbourhood. That attack also wounded eight people, another police officer said.

Medical officials confirmed the casualty figures. All officials spoke on condition of anonymity as they were not authorised to release information.

No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attacks, but they bore the hallmarks of the Daesh group, which often targets commercial areas and large gatherings.

Iraq has been going through its worst crisis since summer 2014 when Daesh militants captured much of the countrys north and the west, including the second-largest city of Mosul. Despite major ground losses since last year, Daesh still controls key areas.

Iraq heavily depended on ageing Russian-made Sukhoi Su-25 jets. In 2014, the country received Sukhoi Su-25 jets from Russia and Iran to help combat Daesh.