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**TURKEY SUMMONS IRAQ AMBASSADOR OVER 'UNACCEPTABLE' STATEMENT BY PARLIAMENT**

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ERBIL, Kurdistan Region □ Turkey summoned the Iraqi ambassador in Ankara on Wednesday after the Iraqi parliament said Turkish troops in Iraq are "hostile occupying forces."

Iraq's ambassador to Turkey, Hisham Ali Akbar Ibrahim Al-Alawi, was called to the foreign ministry in Ankara early on Wednesday, the official Anadolu news agency reported.

The Turkish foreign ministry released a statement on Tuesday in which it said, "We strongly condemn the Iraqi parliament's unacceptable decision, including dirty accusations for Turkish President (Recep Tayyip Erdogan)."

Iraq's parliament had asked the government to send a letter to Turkey's ambassador in Baghdad, which describes Turkish troops in Iraq as "hostile occupying forces."

Turkey deployed combat troops to protect its military advisors in Bashiqa, which is near Islamic State (ISIS) positions, last December. Baghdad condemned the move, saying Turkey was not authorized to deploy combat personnel and demanded an immediate withdrawal. Ankara refused, defending the presence as necessary to protect its base, where Turkish troops are training Sunni Arab Hashd al-Watani militiamen to combat ISIS.

In its latest statement, Turkey again defended its presence in Bashiqa as a necessary measure.

"Turkey has lost thousands of citizens due to the terror threat from Iraq and has defended Iraq's territorial integrity, sovereignty, stability and security taking huge political and economic risks although it has been affected directly by the instability caused by the sectarian approach of Iraq," the statement declared.

It comes shortly after Turkey's parliament voted to give the military a mandate to remain in Iraq, as well as Syria, for another year.

"Turkey will maintain its determination on fighting against terrorist organizations which threaten the national security as a right to self-defense as well as on protecting the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Iraq, with which it shares a common future," the statement added.

The statement went on to urge Baghdad to "take the friendly hand that Turkey offers," to benefit itself and the region "in a period which is so critical in terms of fighting against Daesh (ISIS)."

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Kaynak/Source: