
TURKEY, IRAQ MUTUALLY LIFT VISA PROCEDURES AMID MOSUL OFFENSIVE

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Turkey and Iraq have mutually lifted visa procedures for each other's citizens carrying diplomatic, service and special passports, Turkey's Baghdad ambassador Faruk Kaymakçı said on Thursday.

The new procedure, which was on the table since 2014, will be effective from October 28 and citizens from both countries who held either diplomatic, diplomatic, service and special passports will have access to the other state without any visa requirements. The exception does not include ordinary passports, Kaymakçı said.

Turkish envoy added that all Iraqi citizens who hold ordinary passports can easily obtain visas within a day if they meet visa requirements.

The new agreement came amid restrained relations between Turkey and Iraq over the recent Bashiqa spat. Baghdad complained about the Dec. 4 deployment of troops to Mosul's vicinity, calling it a violation of Iraqi sovereignty and insisting that Turkey withdraw its forces.

Turkey said that 150 soldiers and up to 25 tanks were stationed in Bashiqa to protect Turkish servicemen training Iraqi volunteers to fight Daesh and the soldiers were sent to Bashiqa at the request of Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi.

Turkey's participation in the Mosul operation has also led to controversy and dispute between Ankara and Baghdad. The Iraqi government has vehemently opposed Turkey's role in the Mosul operation.

However, Turkish troops and tanks as well as howitzers have been targeting Daesh positions and suicide attack vehicles in cooperation with the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG).

Kaynak/Source: