
SPOKESMAN: IRAQ'S PMU TO ENTER SYRIA TO AID ASSAD AFTER MOSUL

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Ahmed al-Assadi, a spokesman for the Iraq-sanctioned paramilitary known as Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), said on Saturday that they will fight alongside Syrian President Bashar Al-Assads forces in Syria after finishing their battle against ISIS in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul, Al Arabiya News Channel reported.

The Iran-funded PMU has launched an assault on ISIS west of Mosul on Saturday but reiterated that they would not enter the Sunni majority city.

Jaafar al-Husseini, a spokesman for the Hezbollah Brigades, said they launched an offensive Saturday along with other large militias toward the town of Tel Afar, which had a Shiite majority before it fell to ISIS in 2014. Iranian forces are advising the fighters and Iraqi aircraft are providing airstrikes, he said.

Iraq launched a massive operation to retake militant-held Mosul, its second largest city, last week. The involvement of the Shiite militias has raised concerns the battle could aggravate sectarian divisions.

The Mosul offensive involves more than 25,000 soldiers, Federal Police, Kurdish fighters, Sunni tribesmen and the Shiite militias, which operate under an umbrella organization known as the Popular Mobilization Units.

Iraqi Federal Police, meanwhile, has raised on Saturday the countrys flag at an ISIS southern hub in southern Mosul.