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## **SYRIAN DELEGATION IN BAGHDAD DISCUSSES BORDER SECURITY**

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Press Tv (15 June 2017)

A high-level delegation from the Syrian Defense Ministry has held talks in Baghdad with Iraqi officials on border security to coordinate the ongoing fight against the Daesh Takfiri terrorist group.

Iraq's Defense Ministry said in a statement on Tuesday that Lieutenant General Othman al-Ghanmi, the army's chief of staff, met with a "high-level delegation" from Syria.

"The meeting discussed ... the Iraqi-Syrian field of operations, it being one field against a common enemy, which is the terrorist Daesh organization...", the statement read.

"We discussed holding Syria-Iraq borders to maintain pressure on the terrorist enemy and establishing a joint operations center through which both sides can coordinate."

Ghanmi said the two sides had agreed to continue exchange of intelligence to provide flexibility for Iraqi air forces to bomb targets near the border.

In February, Iraqi fighter jets struck Daesh targets inside Syria in what appeared to be the first time Iraqi planes had conducted such raids across the border. A Syrian source said the strikes had been coordinated.

Syrian troops backed by volunteer forces in Syria's southeast desert reached the Iraqi border last week near Tanf base. The move toward the border took place in a number of directions in the semi-arid al-Badiya region.

Lebanon-based Arabic-language al-Mayadeen news network, citing an unnamed military commander, reported on Monday that the Syrian army units in cooperation with allies had managed to score territorial gains and were now only 600 meters away from the Iraqi border. The Daesh Takfiri terrorists were reportedly among militants initially trained by the CIA in Jordan in 2012 to destabilize the Syrian government.

Over the past few months, Syrian forces have made sweeping gains against Takfiri elements, who have lately increased their acts of violence across the country following a series of defeats on the ground.

Fighters with the paramilitary troops of Hashd al-Shaabi stand on a road on the Syrian-Iraqi border, shortly after they reached the area on May 29, 2017.

Daesh unleashed its campaign of death and destruction in Iraq in 2014, seizing the northern city of Mosul and declaring it as its stronghold in the Arab country.

Since October 2016, Iraqi army soldiers and allied volunteer fighters have been leading a major operation to retake Mosul.

Iraqi forces took control of eastern Mosul in January and launched another offensive in the west in February.

The full liberation of Mosul would likely spell the end for the so-called Daesh caliphate.

In recent years, Iran, Iraq, Russia and Syria have agreed through a series of agreements to step up cooperation in their fight against Takfiri terror groups operating in the Middle East.

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Kaynak/Source: