
IRAQ NEEDS S-400 AIR DEFENSE SYSTEMS TO DEFEND AGAINST AIR ATTACKS — MP

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Iraq seeks to acquire S-400 Triumph anti-aircraft weapon systems to defend its territory from air strikes, Iraqi MP Hakim Al-Zamili, head of the Iraqi parliaments security and defense committee, told Al-Ghad Press daily on Saturday.

"Iraq has the right to own cutting-edge weapons to defend its territory and air space from air attacks," he said. "Terrorism targets our country abundant in places sacred for every Iraqi. There are signs and warnings that extremists might use aircraft for attacks on those shrines, which cause lots of worries and anxiety in the country, as it was after an attack on Samarras holy places."

Samarra, an ancient city in northern Iraq, is home to some Shiite holiest shrines. Among them is the al-Askari mosque, regarded as a pilgrimage site for the Shiites. On 22 February 2006, its famous golden dome collapsed after a blast burying more than 80 worshippers under debris. The shrines destruction plunged Iraq into an unprecedented wave of violence and the country found itself on the brink of a civil war.

"America is a developed country, not less than any other. However, the World Trade Center was attacked by planes," al-Zamili noted. "So Iraq intends to possess such a system as S-400 to defend the land, shrines and air space. We are serious about that."

Along with this, the MP pointed out that the United States "is unwilling to equip Iraq with arms and to supply it with systems that will ensure comprehensive protection in its territory and air space," but wants Iraq "to be an open arena for realization of [US] plans."

"That is why, Iraq needs to have own [anti-aircraft] systems," he added. "It is our right to obtain them."

On Wednesday, the Shafaq News website said that an Iraqi delegation would visit Moscow in the near future for negotiating purchases of S-400 anti-aircraft weapon systems.

In October 2012, Moscow and Baghdad signed a contract for the supply of 48 air defense systems Pantsir-S and 36 helicopter gunships Mi-28 \$4.2 billion worth. The details of the agreement were eventually changed several times as influence of the Islamic State terrorist group grew for a while in Iraq.

The S-400 Triumf (NATO's reporting name SA-21 Growler) is a Russian air defense system of long and intermediate range. It is meant for destroying all current or future aerospace means of attack. It is capable of hitting aerodynamic targets 400 kilometers to 60 kilometers away - tactical ballistic missiles flying at a speed up to 4.8 kilometers per second: cruise missiles, tactical and strategic aircraft and warheads of ballistic missiles.

Kaynak/Source: