
NEWSPAPER: U.S. FORCES IN IRAQ INCREASED, RATHER THAN REDUCED

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by Mohamed Mostafa

Baghdad (IraqiNews.com) The United States has increased the number of its troops in Iraq as opposed to a declared reduction of forces, a newspaper has claimed.

Qatari newspaper The New Arab quoted Iraqi military officials saying that U.S. forces in Iraq have increased, adding that the declaration of the reduction of those troops was untrue. The officials said the U.S. has even intensified the presence of its intelligence operators on the Iraqi-Syrian borders, especially at Habbaniya and Ain al-Assad bases (Anbar), as well as in Balad (Salahuddin), Qayyara (Mosul), Erbil and Mosul.

The U.S. forces are now situated in two camps, one at the Iraqi Tanaf crossing, and the other near the phosphate mines south of Qaem, Anbar, the newspaper quoted the officials saying.

Last March, the Iraqi parliament obliged the government to set a timetable for the withdrawal of foreign troops from the country after the military operations against Islamic State militants ended last December.

The officials noted that those forces contribute to the rehabilitation of Iraqi artillery forces damaged by the war.

According to them, the latest Iraqi airstrikes on the Islamic State locations in Syria were carried out based on aerial photos provided by the Pentagon.

The U.S. has led an international coalition backing Iraqi forces against IS since 2014. The coalition declared late April the end of its land operations in Iraq, and shifting to training purposes. The Pentagon had said late 2017 it maintained slightly more than 8000 troops in Iraq.

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