
IRAN CONSULATE IN IRAQ BURNS A 3RD TIME, AMID PREMIER TALKS

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Anti-government protesters burned an Iranian consulate in southern Iraq for a third time on Tuesday, as the countrys political leaders continued talks over selecting a new prime minister following weeks of widespread unrest.

Five rockets landed inside Ain Al-Asad air base, a sprawling complex in Western Anbar which hosts US forces, without causing any casualties and little damage, said a statement from Iraqs security media cell on Tuesday evening. The statement gave no further details.

President Barham Salih met with Iraqs main political blocs as a 15-day constitutional deadline to name the next prime minister nears, two Iraqi officials said. Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Madi announced his resignation on Friday. The Sairoon bloc, led by influential Shiite cleric Muqtada Al-Sadr, addressed Salih in a letter and said they gave protesters the right to support a premier of their choice.

Anti-government protesters in the holy city of Najaf burned tires and hurled them toward the main gate of the Iranian consulate, burning it for the third time in the span of a week. The building was empty at the time of the attack and there were no casualties, according to a police official.

The incident came after hours of tense standoff with security forces earlier Tuesday when protesters surrounded a key shrine in Najaf. Tens of demonstrators gathered around the Hakim shrine, demanding that Al-Sadr help them enter and symbolically take control. Sadr commands Saraya Salam, a powerful militia group. A few protesters and some elderly tribal sheikhs were eventually permitted to enter the shrine and inspect it.

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