

Araghchi: US evacuation of Ain al-Asad fortifies Iraq's national sovereignty

Iraqi FM says Tehran-Baghdad security part of regional security

International Desk

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said the withdrawal of US military forces from Iraq's Ain al-Asad base would strengthen Iraq's national sovereignty, describing the move as a clear sign of growing independence and stability in the Arab country.

Araghchi was speaking on Sunday during a joint press conference with his Iraqi counterpart, Fuad Hussein, following their meeting in Tehran, where the two sides discussed bilateral relations as well as regional and international developments.

"The withdrawal of US military forces from the Ain al-Asad base and the end of the UNAMI mission are clear indications of the consolidation of independence, stability, and national sovereignty in Iraq," Araghchi said, as reported by Press TV.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran has always sought a strong and independent Iraq and believes that the country has the necessary capacities to play a key role in regional peace and stability." He noted that the meeting came after elections in Iraq and marked a new step toward planning the development of relations between the two countries.

Araghchi also said Iran and Iraq were seeking to reach a "strategic cooperation agreement," reiterating that Tehran supports a "stable Iraq with independent political sovereignty."

For his part, Hussein said security in Iraq and Iran was inseparable from the security of the wider region.

"We believe that the security of Iraq and Iran is part of the region's security. The security of the Iranian people is important to us, just as the security of the



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (R) speaks during a press conference with his Iraqi counterpart Fuad Hussein in Tehran, Iran, on January 18, 2026.
● IRNA

region is important," he said. Hussein said regional officials he met ahead of his trip to Tehran had emphasized that regional security was interconnected.

Iran and Iraq agreed on the "indivisibility of regional security," the need for non-interference in internal affairs, and the continuation of consultations to address regional challenges, he added.

He also said that he was informed about the situation in Iran, in the wake of deadly foreign-backed riots across the country.

Some shopkeepers last month staged peaceful protests in dif-



ferent Iranian cities over economic grievances, which are directly linked to unilateral US sanctions. The demonstrations, however,

were steered toward violence after public statements by US and Israeli regime figures encouraged vandalism and disorder.

During the unrest, foreign-backed armed rioters damaged public property and caused casualties among civilians and security forces.

'Blatant lie': FM spox slams European compassion for Iran's human rights



Esmail Baqaei
● IRNA

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei on Sunday described the European countries' "claim of compassion and concern" for Iranians' human rights as "a blatant lie" amid recent protests over economic problems.

Speaking during his weekly press conference, Baqaei said if the European countries are really concerned about human rights of the Iranian people, they should have lifted sanctions that have been imposed on every Iranian citizen and deprived patients of medicine.

The Iranian official said the Eu-

rope's approach toward international issues has led to diminishing of its credibility as an actor that could have played a constructive role in international developments.

By "blindly" following in the footsteps of the United States and the Israeli regime in international affairs, the Europe is stripping itself of an effective role in international matters, Baqaei said.

He also referred to recent positions taken by some European countries against the Islamic Republic over recent deadly riots in the country, saying that such stances are in no way "acceptable or justifiable."

Baqaei said the European countries have "deliberately" ignored realities in Iran, stressing that they are well aware of the events that took place from January 8th to 10th in Iran, during which peaceful protests over economic woes were hijacked by violent elements trained and equipped from outside the country.

IRGC forces arrest riot ringleaders in Iran's Khuzestan

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) forces arrested ringleaders and terrorist elements involved in recent foreign-linked riots in Iran's southwestern Khuzestan Province, confiscating various types of lethal weapons from them.

In a statement released on Sunday, the deputy public relations of the IRGC's provincial unit in Khuzestan, said those detained are charged with killing the innocent, damaging public and private property, disrupting public order, and terrorizing people, as well as destroying holy places, Press TV reported.

The terrorists had been tasked by foreign agencies to commit acts of sabotage and arson, kill people, assassinate the elite individuals, and create ethnic division, the statement read.

The detainees also assigned to dismantle vital infrastructure such as water and electricity, gas,



telephone, oil pipelines, and attack military facilities and police stations.

Some shopkeepers last month staged peaceful protests in different Iranian cities over economic grievances, which are directly linked to unilateral US sanctions. The demonstrations, however, were steered toward violence after public statements by US and Israeli



The photo shows a bank which has been destroyed in recent riots in Tehran, Iran.
● IRNA

regime figures encouraged vandalism and disorder. During the unrest, foreign-backed armed rioters damaged public property and caused casualties among civilians and security forces.

Istanbul rally denounces US-Israeli threats against Iran



International Desk

Hundreds of people gathered outside Iran's consulate in the Turkish city of Istanbul on Sunday to support Iran against threats posed by the United States and the Israeli regime.

The rally, called by "the International Solidarity Association" in Turkey, followed US threats of military attack on Iran over recent protests in the country. It came a day after thousands of Iraqi demonstra-



People wave Iranian flags during a rally outside Iran's consulate in Istanbul, Turkey to support Iran against US and Israeli threats on January 18, 2026.
● IRNA

tors gathered in the capital Baghdad to show their support for Iran. Peaceful protests over economic concerns across Iran, which began on December 28, gradually turned violent after meddlesome statements by the US and Israeli officials. During the unrest, foreign-backed mercenaries rampaged through cities, killing security forces and civilians and damaging

public property. Since the beginning of protests, US President Donald Trump has repeatedly threatened military action against the Islamic Republic under the guise of supporting protesters.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei on Saturday said Iran considers Trump as the main culprit for the killings and destruction in the riots.

Ayatollah Khamenei added that some of the agents behind the sedition consisted of individuals who had been identified, trained, and largely recruited by American and Israeli agencies.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON

