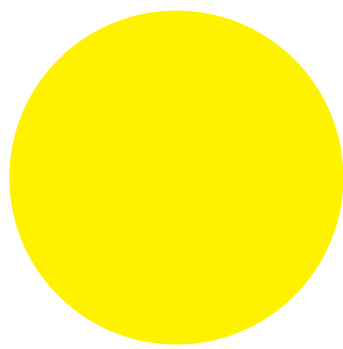


Minister calls theater vital for truth, survival of civilization



8 >



# Iran Daily

Vol. 8031 ● Monday, January 19, 2026 ● Dey 29, 1404 ● Rajab 29, 1447 ● 100,000 rials ● 8 pages



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

2 >



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

Iraqi FM says Tehran-Baghdad security part of regional security

2 >

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (R) and his Iraqi counterpart Fuad Hussein speak to reporters at a joint press conference in Tehran, Iran on January 18, 2026.

### Ain al-Asad evacuation signals US concerns over Iran's possible response

By Delaram Ahmadi  
Staff writer

INTERVIEW  
EXCLUSIVE



The Iraqi Defense Ministry announced on January 17, that US forces had withdrawn from Ain al-Asad airbase, a main site for forces under US command in western Iraq, and that the Iraqi army is in full control of the facility. The base, which has hosted US and Western coalition forces for years in the fight against ISIS, saw a landmark agreement reached between Washington and Baghdad in 2024 for the withdrawal of US-led troops from Iraq. Ain al-Asad was targeted by an Iranian missile strike in 2020, in retaliation for the US assassination of General Qassem Soleimani, commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps' Quds Force, in Baghdad. The evacuation occurs amid heightened tensions between Iran and the United States, as President Donald Trump continues to threaten the Islamic Republic with military action. Sabah Zangeneh, a Middle East affairs expert, told Iran Daily that Washington's cautious move is largely driven by concerns over Iranian retaliation and the potential reaction of anti-US factions inside Iraq in the event of a conflict.

IRANDAILY: Given the escalating military threats from the United States against Iran and the increased likelihood of conflict, what is your analysis of the US forces' evacuation of Ain al-Asad in Iraq? What factors led Washington to make this decision?

ZANGENEH: Iraq has long been a central hub for US forces deployed in the region, situated close to Iran and with a clear history of Iranian response following previous incidents.

Page 8 >



NIOC: 12% of Iran's crude processing allocated to private sector under partnership model

3 >



Files expose Britain's secret D-Notice censorship regime

INVESTIGATION

4 >



Asian Men's Handball Championship: Iran routs Australia to revive main-round hopes

6 >

