



ABOUT INTEGRITY UK

Integrity UK is an organisation committed to preventing extremism through innovative approaches to promoting integration, cohesion and social reconciliation within the MENA region and the UK.

IRAQ INTELLIGENCE REPORT

12th September 2018

More reports have emerged that Muqtada al-Sadr, the leader of the Sa'iroun Alliance, and Hadi al-Amiri, the head of the Fatah Coalition, are close to forming an alliance. According to reports, Sadr invited Amiri to his headquarters in Najaf earlier on Wednesday for a meeting. While the exact nature of the meeting remains unknown, it was likely convened in an attempt to form an alliance given recent developments. The ongoing unrest in Basra has made the Iraqi Prime Minister, Haider al-Abadi, who only a few weeks ago formed an alliance with the Sa'iroun Alliance, a liability for Sadr. As a result, the Sa'iroun Alliance has begun to move closer to the Fatah Coalition and distance itself from Abadi, with leading figures within the party calling on Abadi to resign as Prime Minister on the weekend. Sadr and Abadi have long had a rough relationship.

The tension between the two sides is centred on Abadi's loyalty to the Islamic Da'wa Party. One of Sadr's main demands for joining into a coalition with Abadi is that he resigns from the party. However, Abadi has refused to do so. Therefore, since the chaos in Basra, Sadr has more or less abandoned Abadi and has sought to join forces with the Fatah Coalition. However, according to reports, Sadr will only align with Fatah if they cut Nouri al-Maliki's State of law Coalition from the alliance. As of yet, however, Fatah have not agreed to do so.

The Iranian Ambassador to Iraq has opened a new consulate in Basra after protesters damaged the old building. Basra has seen a recent upsurge in violent protests over the past two weeks. However, reports suggest that the intensity of the protests has decreased significantly over the past few days as a result of recent efforts by the local police to stymie the protests by blocking off the main roads.

Meanwhile, a number of members of parliament (MPs) representing Basra have filed a judicial complaint against the commander of the province's security forces, Jamil al-Shammari, accusing him of "committing crimes against the people of Basra". Many parliamentarians and activists have accused the security forces of violently repressing the protests in the province. Several members of parliament, most notably Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq's Uday Awad, as well as Hassan Khalati, and Assad Abdel Sada, also signed the document. Several protesters also marched to the Basra Operations Command building calling on him to be sacked.

The Iraqi Foreign Minister, Ibrahim al-Jaafari, called on Turkey to withdraw all its forces from Iraq, calling their presence in the country a violation of sovereignty. Jaafari's comments come during a meeting with Arab foreign ministers in the city of Cairo. The statement comes as reports emerge showing that Turkey is actively attempting to set up a military base in the northern parts of the country in a bid to effectively clear the country's border region of fighters belonging to the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). The presence of Turkish forces and military bases in northern Iraq has long been a contentious issue and a

source of tension between the two sides. Turkey believes it has the right to do whatever it takes to deal with the threat of the PKK. However, Iraq believes that Turkish presence in Iraq is a brazen violation of its sovereignty.

A large explosion, reported to be a car bomb detonated outside a restaurant, took place in the town of Hajaj near Baiji in Salahuddin Province, killing approximately six people and wounding 42 others according to the spokesman of the Ministry of Health Saif al-Badr. Since its liberation from the Islamic State (IS), the numbers of attacks around the town of Baiji have decreased significantly and locals have felt safer. However, this latest attack indicates that the group's presence in the province is still significant.

The shortage of water in the country has forced the government to cut the production of wheat by a half for the 2018-19 growing season, according to the Deputy Agriculture Minister Mahdi al-Qaisi. Only 100,000 tonnes of wheat were procured from the Nineveh Plains this year, an area which once produced nearly 1 million tonnes annually before the emergence of the IS in 2014. Earlier this year, the Iraqi Government placed a temporary ban on the cultivation of water-intensive crops like rice, corn, sesame, and sunflowers. However, this latest move will further exacerbate the already significant shortage in wheat in the country. Iraq already has an import gap of one million tonnes of wheat per year, with an annual demand of between 4.5 million to 5 million tonnes. This will mean that Iraq would need to increase imports, which in turn would further harm the country's balance of payments.