

**Joint Statement by President Obama and Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi of Iraq**

*April 14, 2015*

President Obama welcomed Haider Al-Abadi, Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq, and the accompanying delegation to Washington from April 13–16, 2015. The President and the Prime Minister met today at the White House to reaffirm the long-term U.S.-Iraq strategic partnership based on mutual respect and common interests and their shared commitment to the U.S.-Iraq Strategic Framework Agreement. The President expressed his strong support for the progress that the Prime Minister and the Iraqi government have accomplished since the two leaders last met seven months ago.

*Working Together to Destroy ISIL*

President Obama and Prime Minister Al-Abadi reviewed progress in the campaign to degrade and ultimately destroy ISIL. The two leaders honored the sacrifices of Iraqis from all communities in the fight against ISIL and expressed appreciation for the significant contributions of more than 60 partners in the global coalition to counter ISIL. Over 1,900 U.S. and coalition strikes in Iraq have played a critical role in halting ISIL's advance and supporting the Iraqi Security Forces in liberating significant Iraqi territory once held by ISIL. The Prime Minister praised the performance of the Iraqi Security Forces, including the volunteer fighters in the Popular Mobilization Forces, the Peshmerga forces, and local tribal fighters. Prime Minister Al-Abadi thanked the President and the American people for the critical support provided to Iraq, including the important work of U.S. service men and women currently stationed in Iraq and the region, and both leaders reaffirmed the core security partnership between their two countries.

The President and Prime Minister discussed next steps in the campaign to counter ISIL. The Prime Minister stressed the importance of stabilizing areas liberated from ISIL control, and ensuring the full transfer of authority to local officials and local police; the maintenance of civil order; the protection of civilians; the peaceful return of displaced residents; and the restoration of government services and the economy. The Prime Minister emphasized that the Government of Iraq has zero tolerance for human rights abuses and requested assistance from the United States and the coalition to enable immediate and long-term stabilization in areas liberated from ISIL. The Prime Minister underscored the integral role that local populations are playing in liberating their own areas and, accordingly, stressed the importance of enrolling additional tribal fighters in the fight against ISIL as part of the Popular Mobilization Forces. President Obama pledged to continue to support Iraqi Security Forces and tribal engagement initiatives with U.S. training and equipment. He specifically welcomed the recent decision by the Iraqi government to supply thousands of rifles and other equipment to tribal fighters in eastern Anbar province, building on the successful model at Al Asad airbase in western Anbar, where U.S. advisors are enabling tribal operations against ISIL in coordination with Iraqi Security Forces.

The two leaders underscored the threat that terrorism poses to Iraq, the region, and the global community. Both leaders emphasized the importance of implementing of UNSC resolutions 2178 and 2199. They also discussed the critical importance of addressing the sources of extremism and violence, including additional combined efforts in these areas over

the coming weeks, and the President noted that the Prime Minister would continue discussions on the military campaign against ISIL in his meetings with the Secretary of Defense on April 15, in addition to the coalition plenary meeting on the same day.

### *Strengthening a Unified and Democratic Iraq*

Prime Minister Al-Abadi updated the President on political developments in Iraq, including his cabinet's efforts to implement the ambitious national program set forth upon the formation of the government. He noted parliament's passage of a national budget, Iraq's first in years with cross-sectarian support, with key provisions on oil exports and revenue sharing with the Kurdistan Regional Government. Prime Minister Al-Abadi affirmed his priority remains the passage of legislation that was outlined in the national program. The President welcomed the progress that has been made to date, and called on all political blocs to make the compromises necessary for full implementation of the national program.

More broadly, the Prime Minister outlined his vision of a more decentralized model of governance, as called for under the Constitution of Iraq, a model that he asserted was an essential element of the broader strategy for progress in Iraq. He detailed the government's program to devolve security and service delivery to the provincial and local levels. In this light, he noted efforts to empower local government in the stabilization of liberated areas. He also highlighted the importance of the National Guard in providing more authority over security to the residents of Iraq's provinces and to ensuring that Iraq's security forces are broadly representative and close to the communities they are sworn to protect and defend. The President expressed support for the strategy outlined by the Prime Minister and committed to provide all appropriate assistance and support, as called for in the Strategic Framework Agreement, to strengthen Iraq's constitutional democracy.

### *Enhancing Opportunities for the Iraqi People*

The President and the Prime Minister both noted that our two nations must continue to enhance broad bilateral cooperation under the Strategic Framework Agreement. The Prime Minister outlined the range of Iraq's challenges resulting from the global decline in the price of oil, the humanitarian crisis, and Iraq's fight against ISIL. Prime Minister Al-Abadi outlined his government's strategy to shore up the Iraqi economy, including revitalization of Iraq's energy infrastructure and reforms to mitigate corruption and reduce wasteful spending. The two leaders agreed that international support for Iraq's fight against ISIL could be leveraged toward enhancing Iraq's integration with the global economy.

President Obama noted that economic cooperation is central to the long-term U.S.-Iraq partnership. The President congratulated the Prime Minister on Iraq's recent record high oil exports, the highest in more than thirty years, and they affirmed that they will work together to expand Iraqi oil production and exports in the future. The President said he had directed Vice President Biden to convene, on April 16, a Higher Coordinating Committee meeting of the Strategic Framework Agreement to focus specifically on economic issues, including bilateral trade, energy cooperation, private sector reform, and Iraq's fiscal stability.

President Obama and Prime Minister Al-Abadi both reaffirmed the need to address the humanitarian situation in Iraq, where more than 2.6 million Iraqis have been internally displaced since January 2014. President Obama noted his recent decision to provide nearly \$205 million dollars in additional humanitarian assistance to Iraqis in the region and to support Iraq's response to the Syrian crisis, bringing the U.S. contribution to help displaced Iraqis to more than \$407 million since the start of fiscal year 2014.

### *Reinforcing Regional Cooperation*

President Obama expressed his strong support for increased cooperation between Iraq and regional partners on the basis of mutual respect for sovereignty and non-interference in domestic affairs. The Prime Minister updated the President on his consultations with regional capitals and his efforts to enhance regional diplomatic representation in Baghdad. The President confirmed the importance of establishing a strong diplomatic presence in Baghdad by all regional Arab states.

The two leaders agreed that there are no military solutions to the region's conflicts. To this end, Prime Minister Al-Abadi welcomed the framework for a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action between the P5+1 and Iran regarding Iran's nuclear program as a means towards greater peace and stability in the region. Both leaders affirmed that a strong U.S.-Iraq relationship was critical for regional security and in the long-term interests of both countries.

### *Conclusion*

This visit provides an opportunity to review the important progress that Iraq and the United States have made together and to discuss ways to further enhance cooperation across the full spectrum of the strategic partnership. The rapid and extensive response by the United States to the current challenges facing Iraq has highlighted the robust and steadfast relationship between our two countries, and the President and the Prime Minister agreed on the importance of continuing to strengthen this enduring relationship.

NOTE: The joint statement referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

*Categories:* Joint Statements : Iraq, Prime Minister Abadi.

*Names:* Abadi, Haider al-; Biden, Joseph R., Jr.

*Subjects:* Iran : International diplomatic efforts; Iraq : Iraqi military and security forces; Iraq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization; Iraq : Oil supply and refining; Iraq : Prime Minister; Iraq : Reconciliation efforts; Iraq : Relations with U.S.; Iraq : Security cooperation with U.S.; Iraq : Strategic framework agreement with U.S; Iraq : U.S. assistance; Terrorism : Global threat; White House Office : Vice President.

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