

# *Launches Air Strikes Against Islamic State in Iraq*

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Washington, August 8 (RHC)-- U.S. President Barack Obama has authorized air strikes in Iraq to halt the sweeping advance of militants known as the Islamic State. The group has captured large swathes of northern Iraq, including the country's largest dam, near Mosul, and its largest Christian town.

According to reports, the militants have advanced to a half hour drive from the Kurdish regional capital, Erbil, where the United States has a consulate and military personnel. The United States has also begun dropping relief supplies to Iraqis forced to flee their homes.

About 40,000 members of the Yazidi religious minority remain trapped on Mount Sinjar near the border with Syria, surrounded by rebels. Obama claimed that the air strikes may be needed to prevent what he called a "potential act of genocide."

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