

# *U.S. embassy in Baghdad suspends consular operations*

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Baghdad, January 2 (RHC)-- U.S. diplomats at the American Embassy in Baghdad say they have suspended all of its public consular operations, following protests by Iraqi demonstrators at the embassy to condemn Washington's fatal military aggression targeting Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU).

"Due to militia attacks at the U.S. Embassy compound, all public consular operations are suspended until further notice. All future appointments are cancelled. U.S. citizens are advised to not approach the embassy," it said in a statement on Wednesday.

This comes after U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper announced that approximately 750 soldiers would be deployed to the Middle East as an immediate response to the events in Iraq.

Thousands of protesters managed to reach the U.S. diplomatic mission which is located in Baghdad's heavily fortified Green Zone on Tuesday, chanting "Death to America" and burning American flags. The demonstrators also held up signs calling for the diplomatic mission to be shut down and for the parliament to order U.S. forces to leave Iraq.

American forces deployed inside the compound fired tear gas, flash bangs and stun grenades to disperse the crowd, however, the Iraqi protesters breached the outer wall of the high-security compound, throwing bricks and stones at the surveillance cameras around the building.

The incident came after U.S. forces conducted airstrikes on a number of Kata'ib Hezbollah bases in the western province of Anbar. The aerial aggression killed at least 27 individuals and wounded 51 others, according to the latest toll released by the PMU, commonly known by its Arabic name Hashd al-Sha'abi.

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