

NATO to withdraw some troops from Iraq after Soleimani assassination



Brussels, January 8 (RHC)-- The U.S.-led NATO military alliance has announced plans for a temporary withdrawal of some of its troops and personnel from Iraq following the United States' assassination of a top anti-terror Iranian military commander in the Arab country.

"The safety of our personnel is paramount" and some troops would be moved "both inside and outside of Iraq," a spokesman for the trans-Atlantic military alliance told the German news agency DPA on Tuesday. "NATO maintains a presence in Iraq. And we are prepared to continue our training and capacity-building when the situation permits," the spokesman added.

The announcement came shortly after Germany moved to reduce the number of its troops stationed in Iraq due to heightened tensions in the region. The German government said that 30 out of the 130 personnel serving in the country were being redeployed to neighboring countries.

Meanwhile, a top Canadian military official said on Tuesday that some of the estimated 500 Canadian troops in Iraq will be moved temporarily to neighboring Kuwait in the coming days. "Over the coming

days, and as a result of Coalition and NATO planning, some of our people will be moved temporarily from Iraq to Kuwait. Simply put, we are doing this to ensure their safety and security,” General Jonathan Vance, the Canadian chief of defense staff, said in a tweet.

Iraqi lawmakers unanimously approved a bill on Sunday, demanding the withdrawal of all U.S.-led foreign military forces following the U.S. airstrike that killed General Qassem Soleimani, who was the commander of the Quds Force of Iran’s Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC).

The US airstrike was carried out on the direction of US President Donald Trump at Baghdad’s international airport early on Friday, assassinating Lt. Gen. Soleimani, along with his companions, including Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the second-in-command of Iraq’s Popular Mobilization Units (PMU).

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