

# *Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki Steps Aside*

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Baghdad, August 15 (RHC)-- Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki has stepped down to make way for Prime Minister-designate Haider al-Abadi, voicing support for his successor. In an address on state television on Thursday, Maliki said in the address that his decision to give up the position to Abadi shows his desire to “safeguard the high interests of the country.”

Afak television, Maliki’s private network, also ran a bulletin saying: "Maliki joins the greatest men of history by giving up posts." On Wednesday, Maliki’s Dawa Party announced in a statement its commitment to Abadi, calling on different political parties to endorse him as well.

The Dawa Party called on political blocs “to cooperate with the constitutionally designated prime minister, Mr. Abadi, and accelerate the formation of a government in the defined time period.”

The party reportedly announced its decision to endorse Abadi after asking Iraq’s Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani’s opinion on the matter. The top Iraqi Shia cleric said the new premier should have broad national acceptance and be able to work with other ethnic and religious leaders in the country.

The party had initially rejected new Iraqi President Fouad Masoum’s call on Abadi, the former deputy parliament speaker, for the formation of a new government.

Dawa's decision to endorse Abadi came days after Maliki said he would only leave office in case of a court ruling. On Tuesday, Abadi said on his Facebook page that Maliki "will remain a fundamental partner in the Iraqi political process."

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