

# *Iraqi Forces Launch Offensive to Retake Ramadi from ISIL*

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Baghdad, May 26 (RHC)-- Iraqi forces have launched an offensive to reclaim Anbar province from the self-proclaimed Islamic State. Thousands of Iraqi troops and Shiite militias have been massing around the ISIL-held city of Ramadi in preparation for the assault.

The announcement comes after U.S. Defense Secretary Ash Carter criticized the Iraqi forces' retreat from Ramadi, telling CNN they lacked the will to fight. Carter said that there is an issue with "the will of the Iraqis to fight ISIL and defend themselves."

On Monday, U.S. Vice President Joe Biden spoke to Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi to reaffirm Washington's support following Carter's remarks.

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