

# NATO in Iraq

## NATO Mission Iraq (NMI)

At the NATO Summit in Brussels, this past July, following a request from the Iraqi government, Allied leaders launched a new training mission in Iraq, called NATO Mission Iraq (NMI). This new mission will build on training and capacity building efforts already conducted in Iraq through the NATO Training and Capacity Building Initiative for Iraq. This initiative was completed at the end of October 2018.

The commander of the new NATO training mission in Iraq is Major-General Dany Fortin (Canadian Armed Forces).

We expect this new mission to become fully operational in early 2019, with contributions from NATO Allies and NATO partners, including Australia, Finland and Sweden.

NATO personnel will advise Iraqi officials in the Ministry of Defence and the Office of the National Security Advisor and will train instructors, through the concept of “training the trainers”, at Iraqi military schools and academies, in such areas as:

- Countering improvised explosive devices (C-IED);
- Civil-military planning;
- Armoured vehicle maintenance; and
- Military medicine

This will be a non-combat mission. It will include several hundred personnel. It will aim at building more effective, inclusive, sustainable, and accountable national defence and security structures. It will also aim at increasing the professionalism and self-sufficiency of the Iraqi security forces and institutions, by helping Iraq to build capacity to prevent the re-emergence of ISIS/Daesh.

The NATO Mission Iraq has fully integrated civil and military personnel. This will help to maximize the effectiveness of NATO’s efforts and the Alliance’s cooperation with other entities on the ground.

NATO is also a member of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS/Daesh and coordinates closely with the United Nations, the European Union and individual countries in their efforts to support Iraq. The NATO Mission Iraq complements the broader international effort to help Iraq eradicate terrorism and increase the long-term stability of Iraq and the region.



NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg views NATO Training Camp Base-Iraq activities at Camp Besmaya, Iraq, March 5, 2018. Stoltenberg greeted NATO trainers and Iraqi troops while touring the facilities



Major-General Dany Fortin

## Training and capacity-building efforts carried out

In July 2015, Allies agreed on a Defence Capacity Building Package for Iraq to provide practical assistance in various areas. While some advisory support was provided in Iraq, particularly in the area of strengthening national security structures, training of Iraqi security forces was mostly conducted outside of the country, in Jordan (in the areas of countering improvised explosive devices, military medicine, civil-military planning and military training of officers and non commissioned officers) and in Turkey (in the area of cyber defence).

At the NATO Summit in Warsaw, in July 2016, NATO leaders responded positively to a request for support from the Iraqi Prime Minister Al-Abadi and agreed to start training and advising Iraqi security forces and institutions in Iraq, alongside the training of Iraqi officers and non-commissioned officers out of the country.

NATO established a small core team of civilian and military personnel in Baghdad in January 2017. Led by Mr. Paul Smith, NATO's Senior Civilian in Iraq, the team coordinated training and capacity-building activities in the country in support of Iraqi security forces and institutions. Key counterparts for NATO have been the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Interior, the Counter-Terrorism Service, and the Office of the National Security Advisor.

The focus of NATO's efforts in Iraq has been on areas agreed upon with the Iraqi authorities, tailored to the needs of the Iraqi security forces and institutions, and with respect to which areas NATO can provide added value.

Initial training areas identified by the Iraqi authorities, and agreed by NATO, were C-IED, explosive ordnance disposal and de-mining; civil-military planning; and reform of Iraqi security institutions. When reviewing our efforts, Allies agreed to include training in the additional areas of Soviet-era equipment maintenance and military medicine. NATO delivers training through periodic deployments of mobile training teams and through seminars and workshops conducted by members of the Core Team in Baghdad and subject matter experts and trainers. With the NATO Mission Iraq we will move from training and capacity building efforts conducted through mobile training teams coming in and out of Iraq to a locally based training mission. This will help make our efforts on the ground even more effective and sustainable.

In the area of **countering-improvised explosive devices (C-IED, explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) and demining**, fourteen courses and six seminars and workshops for senior leaders have been conducted. All these activities have been carried out through the "train-the-trainers" concept, so that trained Iraqi personnel can in future provide their own training to new Iraqi trainees. The train-the-trainer courses have been provided by trainers from different Allied countries at the Iraqi Bomb Disposal School in Besmaya. The first of such courses was implemented through the NATO Science for Peace and Security Programme, which was a continuation of the courses already provided in Jordan. The focus of these activities has been on enhancing post-conflict IED clearance capacity in urban areas, training on neutralization of deep buried explosive ordnance, and humanitarian demining. In addition to training of personnel, 90 kits of light scale EOD equipment, funded through the Science for Peace and Security Programme, and 160 additional individual C-IED kits, provided through the Defence Capacity Building Trust Fund, were delivered to the Iraqi security forces and institutions to support ongoing and future training. NATO has complemented this training by conducting senior leader seminars and workshops in Baghdad at the ministerial level, in order to consolidate institutionalized training and enhance the skills-set of Iraqi C-IED senior leaders.



Canadian Armed Forces Explosive Threat Training Team conducted an Explosive Threat Search training course for Iraqi trainers, February – March 2018, Camp Besmaya



De-mining Training Course, June – July 2018, Camp Besmaya

In the area of **civil-military cooperation**, eight workshops have brought together Iraqi officers and Director Generals of twelve different ministries and agencies, including the Ministries of Defence, Interior, Water, Electricity, Oil, Migration and Displacement, Public Health, Agriculture, Communications, Transportation, and Education, as well as the Prime Minister's National Operations Centre and the Counterterrorism Service. These high-level focused training, delivered in Baghdad by Allied military officers and civilian staff, focused on strengthening the coordination between Iraqi military and civilian ministries in various phases of security operations and reconstruction efforts. Furthermore, officials from Iraq's Ministry of Interior participated in a seminar, led by NATO International Staff in Baghdad, which focused on **civil emergency planning**, including the protection of critical infrastructure and implementing Iraq's National Disaster Management Strategy.



Civil-Military Cooperation Workshop, 31 July – 03 August 2017, Al Nahrain Centre, Baghdad

In the domain of **reforming Iraqi security institutions**, NATO is supporting the Iraqi security ministries in developing an achievable and sustainable military force structure. To this end, NATO civilian experts on security sector reform and on the promotion of good governance within national security institutions have taken part in joint initiatives, together with other subject matter-experts from the International Community and officers of the Iraqi Ministry of Defence and the Office of the National Security Advisor. Under the past training and capacity building initiative subject matter experts from NATO countries have also provided advice to the Ministry of Defence in the area of human resources management and logistics management. These complementary efforts will help to ensure that follow-on training can be continued effectively through properly trained Iraqi instructors and properly equipped Iraqi training facilities.

In the area of **Soviet-era equipment maintenance**, Allied Mobile Training Teams have provided training to instructors from the Iraqi Engineering School and Maintenance and Engineering Directorate in repairing of Soviet-era armoured equipment in Taji, Iraq, through three workshops.

In parallel to activities conducted inside Iraq, NATO has provided training on **Military Medicine** to Iraqi trainees in Germany and Serbia under the umbrella of NATO's Defence Capacity Building Package in Iraq. These have been followed by a train-the-trainer course in Iraq, at Camp Taji in the surroundings of Baghdad on the development of basic combat life-saving skills and procedures for casualty medical evaluation.



Military Medicine Train-the-Trainer course, 2-18 July 2018, Camp Taji

NATO activities in support of the sustainment of the Iraqi security forces and institutions have and continue to benefit from financial support provided through a NATO-run Trust Fund for Defence and related security Capacity Building (DCB) efforts. Established in March 2015, the DCB Trust Fund has been used in support of capacity building efforts by NATO in different partner countries. In Iraq, more than EUR 661,000 has so far been disbursed to support training and capacity building efforts in the domains of military medicine, countering explosive devices and safe disposal of explosive ordnance, as well as strengthening of civil-military relations. More than EUR 1.13 million has been committed for 2018, in support of training and capacity building efforts on demining, civilian-military cooperation and the maintenance of Soviet-era armoured vehicles.

## Reference links

NATO's relations with Iraq: [www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_88247.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_88247.htm)

NATO Warsaw Summit Communiqué: [www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_133169.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133169.htm)

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