

Joint Statement by President Biden and Prime Minister Muhammad Shia' al-Sudani of Iraq

April 15, 2024

Today, the President of the United States, Joseph R. Biden Jr., welcomed the Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq, Mohammed Shia'a Al-Sudani, to the White House. The two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to the enduring strategic partnership between Iraq and the United States and discussed their visions for comprehensive bilateral cooperation under the 2008 U.S.-Iraq Strategic Framework Agreement. The President and Prime Minister agreed on the importance of working together to advance regional stability and reinforce and respect Iraqi sovereignty, stability, and security.

President Biden and Prime Minister Sudani affirmed that a diversified and growing Iraqi economy, integrated with the region and the global economic system, is the foundation for lasting stability in the region and prosperity for the Iraqi people. The two leaders exchanged views on how political, economic, and security cooperation between the United States and Iraq could advance shared goals, including the development of a strong and stable Iraqi nation that promotes peace and progress throughout the broader Middle East.

Energy and Environment

President Biden applauded Iraq's progress towards energy self-sufficiency, and the two leaders discussed Prime Minister Sudani's interest in future opportunities for cooperation to ensure Iraq becomes self-sufficient by 2030, with help from U.S. companies. President Biden affirmed continued U.S. support for Iraq's efforts to modernize its energy sector, reduce methane emissions, improve public health, more reliably provide electricity for the Iraqi people, and complete the electrical grid connections with neighboring countries, including the ongoing efforts to connect Iraq's grid with Jordan and GCC countries. The two leaders discussed future plans to develop Iraq's resources in a manner that ensures all Iraqis benefit from their country's natural wealth, consistent with Iraq's constitution.

Prime Minister Sudani and President Biden affirmed the importance of ensuring Iraqi oil can reach international markets and expressed their desire to reopen the Iraq-Turkiye Pipeline.

Regional Integration and Political Cooperation

President Biden reaffirmed U.S. support for Iraq in strengthening relations with the international community and states of the region to ensure security, stability, and enhanced prosperity for its peoples. President Biden pledged continued U.S. support for greater economic integration of Iraq with the Middle East region.

President Biden and Prime Minister Sudani discussed their shared view that the Iraqi Kurdistan Region (IKR) is integral to Iraq's overall prosperity and stability. In that vein, the President commended the Prime Minister's and Kurdistan Regional Government's (KRG) efforts to reach durable agreements that resolve longstanding challenges, including the recent arrangement to pay two months of KRG civil servant salaries, and encouraged continued progress. The President also affirmed U.S. support for strengthening democracy in Iraq, including free, fair, and transparent regional elections in the IKR.

Economy and Finance

President Biden and Prime Minister Sudani discussed Iraq's progressive efforts to reform the financial and banking sector to connect Iraq to the international economy and increase trade while shielding the Iraqi people from the harmful impacts of corruption and money-laundering. Through 2023 and 2024, banks in Iraq have expanded their correspondent relationships with international financial institutions to enable trade financing, with the majority of trade finance now occurring through these channels. The two leaders affirmed the importance of these and other measures to improve the investment climate in Iraq to attract foreign capital and promote economic growth. The United States and Iraq commit to strengthen their cooperation to achieve greater transparency and collaboration against money-laundering, financing terrorism, fraud, corruption, and sanctionable activity that could undermine the integrity of both countries' financial systems. The two sides also committed to support the Central Bank of Iraq to fully wind down the wire auction mechanism by the end of 2024 and transition to direct correspondent relationships between Iraqi and international banks, a transformation that will connect Iraqi people and businesses with the international economy.

The Lasting Defeat of ISIS

President Biden and Prime Minister Sudani discussed their commitment to a stable and secure Iraq. They agreed that Iraq's security forces must be able to ensure that ISIS can never again reconstitute inside Iraq to threaten the Iraqi people, the region, or the international community, including the United States. President Biden reiterated his belief that a strong Iraq, capable of self-defense, is critical to regional stability and committed to bolstering the capabilities of security forces across all of Iraq to secure the country's territory and people.

Nearly ten years after establishing the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, the two leaders discussed the Coalition's successes in both Iraq and Syria, where all Iraqi security forces including in Kurdistan were critical to the territorial defeat of ISIS. Both leaders paid tribute to the sacrifices made by Iraqi, United States, and other friendly countries' military personnel serving side-by-side as partners during the historic campaign against ISIS, as well as the civilians killed by ISIS, including the massacres at Camp Speicher, Mount Sinjar, and Hit. Prime Minister Sudani emphasized the national effort that was required to defeat ISIS and discussed his affirmative agenda to continue rebuilding Iraq and restore its position as an engine of stability and growth for the broader Middle East. President Biden noted that the enduring defeat of ISIS would help ensure Iraq's, the region's, and the world's security in the future, as well as its ability to fulfill the Iraqi people's aspirations to develop economically, attract foreign investment, and provide regional leadership.

Enduring Bilateral Security Cooperation

President Biden and Prime Minister Sudani also discussed the natural evolution of the global D-ISIS Coalition in light of the significant progress that has been made in ten years. The two leaders expressed their commitment to the ongoing Higher Military Commission (HMC) process and its results, and the three working groups that will assess: the continued threat from ISIS, operational and environmental requirements, and bolstering Iraq's security force capabilities. The two leaders affirmed they would review these factors to determine when and how the mission of the Global Coalition in Iraq would end, and transition in an orderly manner to enduring bilateral security partnerships, in accordance with Iraq's Constitution and the U.S.-Iraq Strategic Framework Agreement.

The leaders further affirmed their intent to convene later this year the U.S.-Iraq Joint Security Cooperation Dialogue (JSCD) for talks on the future of the bilateral security partnership.

Strategic and Enduring Partnership

President Biden and Prime Minister Sudani renewed their commitment to bilateral partnership for the benefit of their two nations and decided to expand cooperation in all areas discussed in the Higher Coordinating Committee (HCC) meetings co-chaired by the U.S. Secretary of State and Iraqi Minister of Planning. The two leaders affirmed their intent to continue their consultations on a shared vision for comprehensive, productive partnership to advance common goals.

NOTE: The joint statement referred to U.S. Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken; and Minister of Planning Muhammad Tamim of Iraq. It also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist organization. An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Categories: Joint Statements : Iraq, Prime Minister Sudani.

Names: Blinken, Antony J.; Sudani, Muhammad Shia' al-; Tamim, Muhammad.

Subjects: Iraq, economic growth and development; Iraq, Kurdistan Regional Government; Iraq, oil supply and refining; Iraq, Prime Minister; Iraq, relations with U.S.; Iraq, security cooperation with U.S.; Iraq, trade and investment financing, improvement efforts; Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist organization; Secretary of State.

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