

Iraq Violence Drops as al-Qaeda Heads to Syria

Nineveh Province Attacks Dropping Significantly

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The growing Syrian Civil War appears to be doing what eight and a half years of US military operation could not: it is making Iraq's Sunni provinces quiet again. [Iraqi officials say violence is dropping significantly, particularly in the Nineveh Provincial capital of Mosul](#), as al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) fighters are pouring into Syria.



Last week, al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri released a video calling for [Muslims in neighboring countries to join the uprising against Syria's Assad government](#). Though AQI was already sending fighters before this, reports suggest that the rate has increased dramatically.

Bad news for Syria, but good news for Iraq's Maliki government, which is facing its own political fallout with its Sunni Arabs. Al-Qaeda has joined the Arab League, Turkey and others in trying to back rebel groups in Syria, apparently with an eye toward installing a more favorable government.

Iraq is said to be trying to increase security along its border with Syria to prevent the flow of fighters back and forth, but with reports that violence in Nineveh is down some 50% since autumn it seems that the traffic has been overwhelmingly into Syria, and attempts to stop that have been unsuccessful.

The Red Cross [is attempting to negotiate a ceasefire in Syria](#), calling for both sides to halt attacks to allow humanitarian aid into the nation. It is unclear how far such efforts have

gotten.

Meanwhile, Gen. Martin Dempsey denied that the US was planning to arm Syria's rebels, despite public calls yesterday from Sen. John McCain (R - AZ) and others to do so. [He warned that it was "premature" to start sending arms to the nation.](#)

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