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Netherlands joins Germany in halting Iraq mission due to security threat

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15/05/2019



The Netherlands has followed Germany in suspending its mission in Iraq amid heightening tensions between the US and Iraq's neighbor, Iran.

The Netherlands decided to halt the mission which provided assistance to the Iraqi authorities because of a security threat, the Dutch ANP news agency said.

The Dutch Defense Ministry confirmed the suspension of the mission to the media. The ministry's spokesperson told ANP that withdrawal of Dutch forces from the area is *"currently not discussed."*

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Around 50 Dutch soldiers train Kurdish forces in Iraq's northern city of Erbil, others are stationed in Baghdad. According to some reports, the decision to suspend the training mission was taken by the commander of the international coalition which currently operates in Iraq.

The report gave no details about the alleged danger. The Dutch military take part in a training mission, alongside other foreign nations, including Germany.

The German Defense Ministry has earlier announced that it halted its mission aimed at training the Iraqi soldiers, citing increasing tensions on the ground. The developments came after Washington ordered all the non-essential personnel of the American embassy in Baghdad and a

consulate in Erbil to leave Iraq as soon as possible.

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The US evacuation alarmed some EU politicians, who expressed concern that Washington might go to war against Tehran and called on Europe to prevent such an outcome.

*"The US is poised for war with Iran," a leader of the Left Party's faction in the German parliament, Sahra Wagenknecht, warned. She called on those, "who want to save the international peace and the Iranian nuclear deal," to "make it clear that they are against these war plans, arbitrary US sanctions and the use of the US military bases in Europe [in a potential war with Iran]."*

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