

Iraq builds security wall around Baghdad to protect civilians

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Baghdad: Iraqi security forces have begun building a concrete wall surrounding the capital Baghdad in an attempt to protect citizens from possible attacks by Islamic State (IS) terrorists, Iraqi prime minister said on Saturday.

"It is our duty to protect all citizens inside the capital from criminal acts of terrorist groups by reorganising checkpoints and block all the gaps (in front of terrorists) to facilitate peaceful entry and exit of citizens into and out of Baghdad," Xinhua quoted a statement by Haider al-Abadi's office as saying.

Earlier, the Iraqi authorities decided to build a three-meter-high security wall and trench around Baghdad to prevent the infiltration of IS terrorists or smuggling explosives and car bombs into the Iraqi capital to target innocent civilians.

"Baghdad is the capital of all Iraqis and will still belong to them all, and no wall can isolate it from the rest of our people," Abadi said.

Abadi's statement came to quell the anger of some political parties, including the Sunni Arab politicians, who accused the government of seeking to divide the country.

According to a security source, the construction of the security barrier around Baghdad will take place in two phases, with priority in the areas in north and west of the capital, where the territories held by the IS are located.

In Baghdad, many districts have been fenced by concrete security walls to protect residents from attacks by terrorists from other sect during the sectarian strife about a decade ago.

Some of the concrete walls around the districts will be dismantled and used to build the new security wall, as the districts are no longer deemed under sectarian threat, the security source said, adding that the wall will also be equipped with surveillance cameras and explosive detection devices.

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