

## **In 'farewell speech', ISIS chief Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi acknowledges defeat in Iraq**

02/03/2017 22:44 by admin

**Cairo:** The ISIS chief Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi has acknowledged the group's defeat in Iraq in a 'farewell speech' and ordered his non-Arab fighters to either return to their countries or detonate themselves, according to media reports.

Baghdadi, who had declared himself as 'Caliph', issued a statement titled 'farewell speech' which was distributed among ISIS' preachers and clerics yesterday, as Iraqi army tightened noose around the group's last remaining territory in Mosul, Al-Arabiya reported, quoting Iraqi TV network Alsumaria.

Citing the sources in the Iraqi governorate of Nineveh, the report said Baghdadi ordered the closure of the ISIS office regulating the group's fighters and asked the group's non-Arab fighters to either return to their countries or detonate themselves, promising them "72 women in heaven." Baghdadi, who has reportedly been wounded multiple times, carries a USD 10 million bounty on his head.

It is not clear if he is in the besieged city, where he declared his 'Caliphate' in 2014 after the ISIS seized territory covering much of eastern Syria and northern Iraq.

Many of ISIS' terrorists in Iraq have now fled towards the area controlled by the group in neighbouring Syria, it added. Iraqi forces backed by international and US aid launched a massive operation to retake Mosul on October 17. In January, they captured the eastern side of Mosul -- the last ISIS-held city in Iraq.

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