

Fate of 39 Indian workers unknown, says Iraqi PM

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Baghdad: Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi says the fate of 39 Indians captured by the Islamic State group when the extremists initially overran Mosul three years ago is still unknown.

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi

Al-Abadi says the situation is "still under investigation at the moment. I cannot comment any further," in an exclusive interview with The Associated Press on Saturday.

India's external affairs minister Sushma Swaraj had told relatives of the workers+ in July that they might be held in a prison in Badush, northwest of Mosul, which Iraqi forces have taken back from IS.

The abducted workers, mostly from northern India, had been employed by an Iraqi construction company. Thousands of Indians worked and lived in Iraq before IS swept across the country's north and west in 2014.

Iraqi forces declared victory over IS in Mosul in July after a gruelling nine-month fight.

- AP