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Maliki to visit US July 21 to bolster non-military cooperation Maliki to visit US as violence continues in Iraq



An Iraqi policeman was killed and 15 others wounded Sunday

BAGHDAD (Al Arabiya, AFP)

Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki is to visit the United States July 21, one of his advisers told AFP on Sunday, in a trip aimed at bolstering non-military cooperation amid a recent spat of violence in Mosul.

Maliki will meet United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in New York as well as President Barack Obama in Washington," said Yassin Majid, announcing the start of the visit of several days.

United States Vice President Joe Biden, whom Obama has appointed as his administration's point man on Iraq, visited Baghdad at the start of July and urged Iraqi leaders to speed progress on its national reconciliation process.

Biden has repeatedly voiced concern about lingering feuds between Iraq's Shiite, Sunni and Kurdish communities being a roadblock to political progress.

However, the Iraqi government refused a U.S. offer to intervene, describing the national reconciliation process as an internal matter and warning that outside interference could cause additional problems.

Maliki said on Friday that a June 30 U.S. troop pullback from Iraqi towns and cities signaled that the two countries had "entered a new phase."

"We will work during the next visit to the United States to push forward bilateral relations in various areas" and to work to remove sanctions imposed during the ousted regime of Saddam Hussein, Maliki said.

Mosul attacks

Also on Sunday, an Iraqi policeman was killed and 15 others, including three police, were wounded in four separate grenade attacks in the same Mosul street on Sunday, a security official told AFP.

An officer died at around 11a.m. (0800 GMT) when his patrol car was targeted on al-Corniche street in the restive northern city, where attacks on security forces remain common, the official said.

Two police were hurt in a similar attack 90 minutes later and two further grenade incidents wounded a third officer and a total of 12 civilians.