



By: TA | AP Brief

Trump meets with Iraq's new PM, expecting a new chapter between two nations



President Donald Trump is welcoming Iraq's new prime minister to the White House on Tuesday after strongly backing the political neophyte in his bid for office.

Ali al-Zaidi, a businessman with no political background, emerged as a consensus candidate in Iraq after months of deadlock over the premiership following last year's parliamentary elections.

When al-Zaidi was formally installed as prime minister-designate in April, **Trump said** in a social media post that it was the “beginning of a tremendous new chapter between our Nations — Prosperity, Stability, and Success like never seen before.”

But Trump's interest and **involvement** in the next leadership in Iraq began long before that statement.

Iraq's dominant parliamentary bloc, the Coordination Framework — a coalition of Shiite parties allied with Iran — initially said it would back former Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, whom the Trump administration views as too close to Tehran.

The U.S. president publicly announced his **opposition to al-Maliki** and threatened to cut off aid to Iraq if he was appointed, adding that “if we are there to help, Iraq has ZERO chance of Success, Prosperity, or Freedom.”

Iranian-backed militias

The issue of Iran is likely to loom large in the discussions Tuesday. Iraq has been under pressure to disarm a network of Iran-backed militias operating in the country, some of which launched attacks on U.S. bases and diplomatic facilities after the U.S. and Israel launched their war against Iran in February.

Officially, the Iraqi government has given non-state armed groups until the end of September to disarm, but some of the most powerful militias have said they have no intention of doing so.

A Trump administration official said ahead of the Oval Office meeting that the U.S. will make “informed” decisions based on Iraq's efforts to disarm Iranian-backed militias inside its borders.

The official was granted anonymity to discuss the administration's strategy ahead of al-Zaidi's visit.

The U.S. will put significant pressure on al-Zaidi - Renad Mansour

Renad Mansour, director of the Iraq Initiative at the Chatham House think tank, said he expects that “the U.S. will put significant pressure on al-Zaidi” to move ahead with disarmament during his Washington visit “and Zaidi will respond by saying, ‘But I need support — intelligence support, technical support, armed support.’”

“There is a scenario in which, if the Iraqi government starts going after these groups, they will also go after the government,” Mansour said. “And this is a scenario that I think that the Iraqi government is apprehensive about.”

Al-Zaidi received Trump's blessing, despite the fact that he was chairman of a bank — Al-Janoob Islamic Bank — that was among the financial institutions banned by Iraq's central bank in 2024 from dealing in dollars amid pressure from the U.S. to crack down on money laundering and funneling of funds to Iran.

Since taking office, al-Zaidi has made a public show of cracking down on corruption.

His government has conducted raids and arrested dozens of current and former lawmakers and government officials accused of corruption, including a number affiliated with former Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani.

The Iraqi premier's delegation to Washington includes a number of Iraqi businessmen as well

as government officials, and al-Zaidi's office said in a statement that the aim of the visit is to "strengthen economic and development partnerships, attract investment, and expand the role of U.S. companies in implementing infrastructure projects" and to further develop the oil-rich country's energy sector.