

Iraqi forces begin operation against IS along Syrian border

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Baghdad: Iraq's security and paramilitary forces began Sunday a military operation along the border with Syria aimed at clearing the area of Islamic State group militants, the military said in a statement.

Although Iraq declared victory against IS in July 2017, the extremists have turned into an insurgency and have carried out deadly attacks in the country.

The military said the operation that began at sunrise was being carried out by Iraqi troops and members of the Popular Mobilization Forces that largely consist of Iran-backed militias.

It said the operation will last several days and was the first phase of the Will of Victory Operation securing the western province of Anbar and the central and northern regions of Salahuddin and Nineveh.

"We press on the hands of our heroic forces that will achieve victory with the will of its heroes against the gangs of Daesh," said Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi using an Arabic acronym to refer to IS. "May God protect you and make you victorious."

IS once held large parts of Syria and Iraq where it declared a caliphate in 2014. The extremists lost in March the last territory they controlled in Syria.

- AP