

Chief of the Defence Staff



Chef d'état-major de la Défense

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Ottawa (Ontario)
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7 January 2020

To our Families,

The news coming out of the Middle East is alarming for many of you, as such I thought it best to communicate with you directly to provide an update on Canada's missions in the region, and more importantly, the status and well-being of your family and friends deployed in Iraq and Kuwait and elsewhere in the Region.

First and foremost, let me assure you that all necessary force protection measures that can be taken have been taken. The safety and security of Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) personnel is my priority, as it is the priority of my senior leadership. Force protection measures continue to be considered, reassessed, and modified as required on a daily basis.

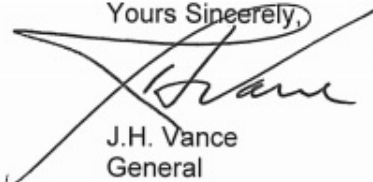
In response to the events of late, the CAF, working in collaboration with our international partners, has temporarily paused our efforts in Iraq that fall under Operation IMPACT, and the NATO Mission Iraq (NMI). The situation in Iraq is complex and it is best to pause our work there in order to fully concentrate our attention and efforts towards the safety and security of our personnel while the situation develops.

We have approximately 800 military members in the region, about 500 in Iraq, some of them are deployed on Operation IMPACT, and some with NMI - two separate missions. Over the coming days, and as a result of Coalition and NATO planning, some of our people will be moved temporarily from Iraq to Kuwait. Simply put, we are doing this to ensure their safety and security. This also holds true of NMI. While this adjustment of our posture is underway, planned HLTA (leave) and rotation of people in and out of their tours will be interrupted.

Despite the operational pause in Iraq, our mission in the Middle East carries-on with multiple other operations in the region. Naturally, the work we are doing on these missions, and the future of operations in Iraq, remain conditional on maintaining a sufficiently secure and productive operational environment.

Over the coming days and weeks we, the leadership of the Canadian Armed Forces, will communicate with you again, and as often as necessary, to ensure that you are well informed about the status of your CAF loved-ones. Thank you for your continued support to those deployed in the service of Canada.

Yours Sincerely,



J.H. Vance
General



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