

RELEASE IN FULL

From: Abedin, Huma <AbedinH@state.gov>
Sent: Saturday, July 30, 2011 1:38 PM
To: H
Subject: Fw: Iraq's Maliki wins approval to trim government (Reuters)

From: OpsNewsTicker
Sent: Saturday, July 30, 2011 01:11 PM
To: NEWS-Mahogany; NEWS-Iraq
Cc: SES-O
Subject: Iraq's Maliki wins approval to trim government (Reuters)

BAGHDAD (Reuters) - Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki won parliamentary approval on Saturday to trim the size of Iraq's government by cutting more than 10 ministries in an effort to meet popular demands for more efficiency and better basic services.

The measure could stir tension in his cross-sectarian government, where critics accuse Maliki of seeking to consolidate his position by doing away with posts belonging to opposition parties such as the Sunni Muslim-backed Iraqiya.

Many Iraqis, encouraged by protests sweeping the rest of the Arab world, earlier this year took to the streets to demand improvements in public services and the food rationing system, and call for an end to corruption.

The current cabinet has more than 40 posts, including 16 ministers without portfolio.

"The parliament voted to cancel all ministries of state without of portfolio, except three," Sadiq al-Rikabi, a lawmaker and top aide to Maliki's Dawa party, told Reuters.

Maliki said a second stage would merge other ministries that were carrying out similar work, such as those for agriculture and irrigation.

NewsTickers alert senior Department officials to breaking news. This item appears as it did in its original publication and does not contain analysis or commentary by Department sources.