**Saudi Arabia to reopen embassy in Baghdad**

Saudi Arabia has announced its plans to reopen its embassy in Iraq once the situation improves in the country.

The announcement was made by Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal after he held wide-ranging talks with his Iraqi counterpart, Ibrahim Al-Jaafari, in Jeddah, confirmed Osama Nugali, Foreign Affairs Ministry spokesman, on Saturday.

“Prince Saud has assured Al-Jaafari that the Saudi Embassy would be reopened in Baghdad,” said a statement that was also released by the Iraqi Foreign Ministry office.

The Saudi side has not given any time frame for the embassy’s opening. Riyadh now needs to resolve “technical, administrative and security” issues before it can re-establish the mission and assign an ambassador.

Jaafari described this decision as “important and necessary.”

“A country caught in its own cross-fire, Iraq remains an important nation and maintaining embassies around the world, even under difficult conditions, is a central pillar of the Kingdom’s diplomatic policy,” said an Arab diplomatic source, while welcoming the Saudi move.

He said: “we are serious in opening a new page of relations based on common interest and jointly confronting common dangers, including terror threats.”

The Kingdom’s decision demonstrates the importance attributed by the Saudi government to its ties with Iraq and its resolve to ensure peace and security in the region.

Riyadh will take the reopening as an opportunity to enhance friendly cooperation with Iraq in various fields, the diplomat added.

The move is also significant keeping in view the geographical proximity of Iraq and the huge border it shares with Saudi Arabia. The Kingdom is currently building a 900 km sophisticated fence along its northern border with the war-torn country.

Iraq also ranks second worldwide after Saudi Arabia for proven oil reserves, with estimates exceeding 140 billion barrels today.

The Kingdom, which never posted its envoy in Baghdad after 1990, named a non-resident ambassador, Fahd Abdulmohsen Al-Zaid (the then Saudi ambassador in Jordan), for the first time in 2012. In 2009, Baghdad named its first post Gulf-war ambassador to Saudi Arabia.