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Kerry urges Iraqis to remain calm amid political crisis, backs president over PM

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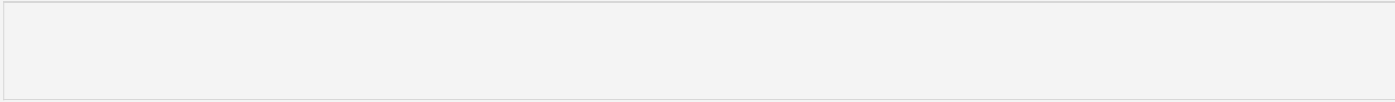


SYDNEY – U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry is urging the people of Iraq to remain calm as the country faces a political crisis while battling advances by Islamic State militants.

Speaking in Australia on Monday, Kerry said there should be no use of force by political factions as Iraq struggles form a government. He says the people of Iraq have made clear their desire for change and that the country's new president is acting appropriately despite claims of malfeasance by Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki.

Maliki is resisting calls to step down and says he'll file a complaint against the president for not naming him prime minister.

Kerry notes that Maliki's Shia bloc has put forward three other candidates for the prime minister job and says the U.S. stands with the president.



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