**[Escalation between Ankara and Baghdad as Erdogan slams Abadi](http://www.arabnews.com/node/996636/middle-east)**

JEDDAH: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has rejected Iraqi Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi’s criticism of the presence of Turkish troops in Iraq ahead of a planned operation to retake Mosul from Daesh.

“Who’s that? The Iraqi prime minister? First you know your place,” retorted Erdogan.

“You are not my interlocutor; you are not my equal,” Erdogan told a meeting in Istanbul at which he addressed Al-Abadi. “You should know your limits.”

“It is not important at all how you shout from Iraq. You should know that we will do what we have to do,” said Erdogan.

Turkey shares a 1,200 km border with Syria and Iraq, and faces threats from Daesh in both. Turkey is concerned however, that once Daesh is evicted from Mosul, the overwhelmingly Sunni city will be taken over by Iran-affiliated Shiite militias.

Ankara maintains an estimated 2,000 troops in Iraq — around 500 of them in the Bashiqa camp in northern Iraq. They are training local fighters who will join the battle to recapture Mosul, according to Turkish media reports.

The Iraqi premier’s spokesman, Saad Al-Hadithi, said Erdogan was “pouring oil on the fire” with his remarks. “Turkey’s response has turned a law and security issue into a problem of a personal nature,” he told AFP.

The differences between Ankara and Baghdad flared up after the Turkish Parliament extended a government mandate by one year thereby allowing its troops to remain on both Iraqi and Syrian soil.

The Shiite-dominated Iraqi Parliament labeled the Turkish troops an “occupying force.”

Erdogan rejected the demand for Turkish troop withdrawal.