

Beat: Miscellaneous

Iraq searches Syria-bound cargo plane from Iran

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USPA News - Iraqi authorities on Saturday ordered a Syria-bound cargo plane to land in the capital Baghdad to make sure it was not carrying weapons or other prohibited items, nearly a month after a similar search was carried out, Iraqi aviation officials said on Sunday. The Iranian cargo plane was en-route to the Syrian capital of Damascus when it was ordered to land at Baghdad International Airport, Iraq's largest airport, to undergo a search for prohibited items which could be used by the regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad during the ongoing civil war.

The Iraq Civil Aviation Authority (ICAA) said the aircraft was forced to land and searched, but only medical supplies, food, and humanitarian goods were found to be on board. Authorities later allowed the plane to continue flying to Syria as no prohibited items were on board. Earlier this month, on October 2, Iraqi authorities ordered another Iranian cargo plane to land in Baghdad to make sure no weapons were on board. The searches come after the United States urged Iraqi authorities to check all Iranian aircraft flying through its airspace, but Iraq has said it will only search planes when there are doubts. In October 2011, the Iraq Civil Aviation Authority assumed full control of airspace covering Baghdad. With the transfer of the Baghdad/Balad Airspace sector, Iraqi authorities assumed full air traffic control responsibilities for the country's airspace for the first time since 2003, when a U.S.-led invasion led to the ouster of Saddam Hussein's regime.

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