

《恐怖组织IS二号被美军击毙》

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WASHINGTON, March 25 (Xinhua) -- The Pentagon announced on Friday a senior Islamic State (IS) commander in Syria believed to be in line to lead the extremist group had been killed by the United States.

Abd al-Rahman Mustafa al-Qaduli, also known as Haji Imam or al-Afri, served as IS's finance minister, and was killed this week by U.S. military, U.S. defense chief Ash Carter said here at a Pentagon briefing.

"We've taken out the leader who oversees the funding for ISIL's operations, hurting their ability to pay fighters and hire recruits," said Carter, adding that the U.S.-led coalition was "systematically eliminating" IS's cabinet.

Carter refused to offer details about the operation against al-Qaduli, whom many analysts consider the extremist group's second-in-command expected to lead the group if its leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi was killed or incapacitated.

U.S. TV network CNN on Friday quoted U.S. officials who spoke on condition of anonymity as saying that the U.S. raid was initially intended to capture al-Qaduli alive.

Meanwhile, Carter acknowledged that striking IS leadership was far from sufficient, noting that "leaders can be replaced."

This was not the first time al-Qaduli had been declared dead. The Iraqi Defense Ministry last May announced that a U.S.-led coalition airstrike killed him in northern Iraq, a claim soon dismissed by the Pentagon.

The U.S. Department of Treasury designated al-Qaduli as a specially global terrorist in 2014. In 2015, the U.S. State Department offered a 7 million U.S. dollars reward for information on him, the highest reward for any IS member except for the group's leader al-Baghdadi.