

Kurdistan in Irak - Former Peshmergas: Attacks on Qandil and Sinjar red line

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A group of 200 former peshmergas have held a press conference in Qandil regarding rumours that the Turkish state will carry out an operation on the Kurdistan Region in Northern Iraq (Southern Kurdistan).

Some 200 former (*Dêrin*) peshmergas visited the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) base in Qandil mountains with their weapons and held a press conference on 3 January 2017.

Speaking on behalf of the group, Omer Heci Husen said a military operation on Qandil and the Yazidi homeland Sinjar was a red line.

“As Dêrin peshmergas of 40-50 years, we are aware of the attacks on the gains of the Kurdish people. We know that the Turkish state, with support from international forces, has started a new wave of attacks against the gains of the peoples of Kurdistan. We, as the Dêrin peshmergas will not allow a fight amongst Kurds. We are calling on everybody to be mindful of these games. We consider the Turkish state entering Southern Kurdistan as an attempt at invasion geared towards destroying these gains.”

The spokesperson also criticised the recent statement by KRG Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani, who had said they would use force if necessary to remove PKK fighters from Sinjar.

“We are critical of Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani. He shouldn't be making such calls. His calls don't serve the interests of the Kurdish people, because we are going through a very delicate period.”

Guerillas should stay

Heci Husen also said that it was the PKK fighters who had saved the Yazidi community from the Islamic State group's onslaught and added: “It is guerrillas who saved the people of Shengal from a genocide. Yazidi women and children are still sold at markets and it is guerrillas who fight for them. Barzani's remarks are wrong and must be in favour of national unity instead. Our gains today are tens of times more than the gains we had in 1992.”

KCK's call should be supported

The former peshmergas also stated support for the KCK's recent call for a Kurdish National Congress.

“Kurds have a great defence force which serves as the defense of the people. From Sinjar to Kirkuk and Raqqa, everywhere where this defence force exists is sacred for the people. We address our remarks to everyone from all circles, to all politicians, intellectuals and non-governmental organisations; everyone should act regarding the call KCK made for Kurdish National Congress which is the only way to a solution for the existing problems.”

Tensions have been rising between the PKK and Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) in the KRG with KDP officials demanding that PKK fighters leave the Sinjar region. Recently PKK commander Murat Karayilan responded to calls by Masoud and Nechirvan Barzani to leave Sinjar by saying they were in talks to resolve issues with dialogue. Earlier the PKK Sinjar Command had said its mission in Sinjar was not complete and they would not leave.

Turkey and the US have also made statements calling for the PKK to leave Sinjar with Ankara threatening a cross-border operation if this does not happen.

The KCK is the umbrella organisation/system formed by the PKK and includes dozens of other political parties and groups across the Kurdish regions.

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* Source: ANF, Kurdishquestion.com