
TURKEY WARNS BAGHDAD OVER PLAN TO RAISE KURDISH FLAG IN KIRKUK

- 30.03.2017

AFP (30 March 2017)

Turkey on Wednesday voiced its opposition to a vote in the disputed oil-rich Iraqi city of Kirkuk to fly the Kurdish flag over government buildings, warning against unilateral steps.

Provincial councilors in Kirkuk province voted Tuesday to fly the Kurdish regional flag, a move likely to escalate tension between Baghdad and Ankara.

Iraqi Kurds are close to Ankara, but Turkey said it opposed flying the flag because it does not want to encourage any change in the composition of Kirkuk, which is also home to Turkmen.

Kirkuk is at the centre of a long-running dispute over northern territory that Kurdish authorities want to incorporate into their autonomous region, a move the federal government in Baghdad opposes.

We don't find correct the vote held by the regional administration, Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu told the state-run TRT television.

First of all it would not be correct to change that region's ethnic composition, he said, adding that hasty accomplishments or unilateral steps would bring no benefit.

We are supporting Iraq's and Syria's territorial integrity.

The United Nations has also warned that the decision to fly the Kurdish flag over the citadel in Kirkuk could inflame tensions.

Kirkuk is home to various religious and ethnic communities, some of which — notably Arabs and Turkmen — do not want to see the province under permanent Kurdish control.

Kaynak/Source: