
IRAN, RUSSIA PRESIDENTS VOICE SUPPORT FOR TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF IRAQ

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The presidents of Iran and Russia have expressed their support for Iraq's territorial integrity and national unity amid a highly controversial referendum on independence of the country's semi-autonomous Kurdish region.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, held a telephone conversation on Monday to discuss the latest developments pertaining to mutual relations and regional issues.

[Improving] regional security and safeguarding Iraq's territorial integrity and national unity are very important and vital for the Islamic Republic of Iran, Rouhani said, adding that coordination and cooperation among regional countries could play a prominent role in this regard.

Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdistan Region kicked off an independence referendum on Monday in the face of strong objections from the central government in Baghdad and urgent calls from the international community to scrap the vote.

The voting stations are dotted across the three provinces of Erbil, Sulaimaniyah and Dohuk that form the Iraqi Kurdistan Region as well as in the disputed bordering zones such as the oil-rich province of Kirkuk.

Initial results are expected to be announced 24 hours after the vote. The non-binding vote on the secession of the semi-autonomous region has irked the central government.

Iraqi Kurds are voting in a controversial independence referendum that has drawn massive objection at regional and international levels.

The Iranian president held separate phone calls with Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi and his Turkish counterpart, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, on Sunday to discuss the independence vote.

Iranian and Turkish presidents discuss a highly controversial planned referendum on the independence of the semi-autonomous Kurdish region in Iraq.

Elsewhere in his conversation with the Russian president, Rouhani welcomed the development of Tehran-Moscow relations in all fields.

He added that presidents of Iran, Russia and the Republic of Azerbaijan would hold a meeting in Tehran in the near future to discuss issues of common interest.

We attach significance to trilateral relations among Iran, Russia and Azerbaijan, the Iranian chief executive pointed out.

Rouhani also stated that Iran and Russia had a common stance on the crisis in Syria, adding, [Protecting] the territorial integrity [of countries] in the region and [preventing] any change to borders are very important to the Islamic Republic of Iran and we are completely ready to continue cooperation for [holding] the next round of [Syria peace] talks in Astana.

Representatives from the Syrian government and foreign-sponsored armed opposition held the sixth round of peace talks in the Kazakh capital of Astana in September in a bid to resolve the Syrian conflict.

The negotiations were supervised by Iran, Russia and Turkey as the mediators of the talks.

The sixth round of Syrian conflict resolution negotiations starts in the Kazakh capital city of Astana.

Russia and Iran are the main international backers of the Syrian government in its battle against foreign-backed terrorists.

At Damascus request, Iran has been providing military advisory support to the Syrian army in its counterterrorism operations.

Russia has been also carrying out an aerial campaign in Syria in coordination with Damascus since September 2015 to further boost the Syrian militarys anti-terror fight.

The Russian president, for his part, reiterated his countrys support for the central government in Baghdad and Iraqs territorial integrity, IRNA reported.

Putin also indicated Moscows resolve to boost all-out relations with Iran, saying that the speedy implementation of development projects currently underway between the two countries would help promote ties

Kaynak/Source: