
UNSC "REAFFIRMED" IRAQI UNITY, CALLS ON DE-ESCALATION

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Amid spars between Iraqi security forces and the Kurdish Peshmerga, the UNSC has reaffirmed support for Iraq's claim to territorial integration.

French Ambassador to the United Nations Francois Delattre, the current president of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), said at the UN headquarters in New York City that the UNSC "reaffirmed" territorial integration despite the controversial Kurdish independence referendum.

The council also urged the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) and the Iraqi government to engage in diplomatic talks to de-escalate recent armed clashes in Kirkuk.

Council members called on all sides to refrain from the threat and use of force and to engage in constructive dialogue facilitated by the United Nations upon request as a pathway to de-escalation and a means to preserve Iraqi unity, the ambassador said.

Both parties have said that they are willing to engage in dialogue to maintain order in northern Iraq.

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi has maintained a firm position on nullifying the Kurdish independence referendum and securing Iraqi natural resources in the semi-autonomous Kurdistan region of Iraq. Abadi has also demanded that Kurdish officials respect the Iraqi constitution and that any less will not be accepted.

The UNSC reiterated that the importance of remaining focused on efforts to defeat the Islamic State group. The United States, a military financier of both the KRG and Iraqi security forces, has repeatedly made similar marks, declaring neutrality on the matter and urging both sides to focus efforts on the Islamic State group.

In September, before the independence referendum, the UNSC released a press statement saying:

Council members note that the planned referendum is scheduled to be held while counter-Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Islamic State group) operations □ in which Kurdish forces have played a critical role □ are ongoing, and could detract from efforts to ensure the safe, voluntary return of over 3 million refugees and internally displaced persons.

Regional countries, such as neighboring Turkey and Iran, have stressed that Kurdish separation would create hostility and instability in the Middle East regions. Both countries also took restrictive

measures against the KRG such as blockading border crossings and imposing trade embargoes which followed similar steps taken by the Iraqi government.

Local Kurdish opposition parties have criticized KRG president Masoud Barzani for destabilizing Iraq by opportunistically calling the independence referendum during a critical moment in the battle against the Islamic State group.

Kaynak/Source: