



Iraq, Turkiye seal landmark security deal to uproot Kurdish militia

Description

WORLD : The governments of Iraq and Turkiye on 14 March agreed on a landmark security deal that will see the neighboring nations take joint action against the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), a group Ankara and its NATO allies have labeled a “terrorist” organization.

As part of the new deal, Baghdad officially labeled the PKK a “banned organization,” with reports on Arabic media saying that high-ranking officials from the two countries are planning a “major military operation” to uproot the group from northern Iraq.

According to sources in Ankara who spoke with Asharq al-Awsat, this operation would reportedly include creating a “buffer zone” within Iraq’s borders and could involve the Popular Mobilization Units (PMU).

Iraqi sources who spoke with the Saudi-owned daily revealed that the operation could receive political support in exchange for deals on water and energy resources.

A high-level Turkish delegation, which included Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, Defense Minister Yasar Guler, and Ibrahim Kalin, the head of Turkiye’s intelligence agency (MIT), visited Baghdad on Thursday for the second round of a top security meeting with their Iraqi counterparts. The first round was held in Ankara in December.

“Both sides stressed that the PKK organization represents a security threat to both Turkiye and Iraq, and it is certain that the presence of the organization on Iraqi territory represents a violation of the Iraqi constitution,” reads a joint statement issued by the foreign ministries of the two nations.

“Turkiye welcomed the decision taken by the Iraqi National Security Council to list the PKK as a banned organization in Iraq. The two sides consulted on the measures that must be taken against the organization and its banned extensions [PKK’s alleged offshoots] that target Turkiye from within Iraq’s territory,” it added.

Both sides also discussed preparations for Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan's visit to Baghdad, which is expected to take place "after the holy month of Ramadan."

The agreement comes as the two nations progress toward developing a major trade route connecting Iraq to Europe and restarting a critical oil pipeline from northern Iraq to Türkiye's coast.

As part of this strategy, Baghdad and Ankara hope to convince Gulf states to help finance the \$17 billion project, arguing that this corridor—stretching from Iraq's southern Basra province to Türkiye and then Europe—could provide an alternative for sending goods from Asia to Europe at a time when the US support for Israel's genocide in Gaza has significantly disrupted trade in the Red Sea.

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