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Turkey Extends Anti-Kurd Airstrikes Into Northern Iraq

By Jason Ditz
August 29, 2016

Fighting a protracted war against Kurdish forces inside southeastern Turkey, and invading northern Syria last week primarily with an eye toward fighting against the Kurdish YPG forces there, Turkey's military today confirmed anti-Kurd strikes in a third country, Iraq.

The state media reported a series of cross-border airstrikes into the Gara region in northernmost Iraq, hitting targets which Turkey claimed were linked to the PKK. It is not unusual for Turkey to make such claims in strikes against Iraq, though often the locals insist there was no PKK presence in targeted areas.

The PKK is primarily a faction within Turkey itself, where it is a major secessionist movement and considered a terrorist organization. To facilitate what were ultimately failed peace talks in recent years, a number of PKK forces were relocated across the border, into Iraq, and since the resumption of the war last year has made those areas targets.

Turkey claimed to have destroyed targets in northern Iraq, but there are so far not any casualty figures or any confirmations out of Iraq about what was hit. Generally speaking, neither the Iraqi government nor the Kurdistan Regional Government offer much more than token criticism of such strikes.