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Syria's Kurds Head to Iraq to Prepare for War

By Jason Ditz

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Syria is quickly and violently factionalizing, with the various rebel factions seizing territory in the north and the regime consolidating its gains around the capital city of Damascus. War is raging nationwide. And then there's the northeast.



Oil rich northeastern Syria, the nation's Kurdish region, has [so far declined](#) to take sides in the ongoing Civil War, but locals don't see themselves being able to stay on the sideline forever, and [many are flocking to Iraqi Kurdistan](#) to prepare.

But what are they preparing for? That's not clear at all, as the locals train with the Peshmearga, the militia of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and see the possibility of fighting either the Assad regime or the rebels.

Some estimates say that 25,000 Syrian Kurds are now in KRG-run camps for training, but exact details are scant as they are kept from leaving during their training.

The Assad regime has mostly pulled out of the area to focus on the civil war, and a few bombings aside the rebels haven't showed much interest in it either. How long this will last remains to be seen.