

Turkish army clashes with PKK inside Iraqi Kurdistan, rebels say

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By Editorial Staff



Kurdish PKK rebels in the border area between Turkey and Iraqi Kurdistan border, June 17, 2017.
Photo: ANF

AMEDI, Iraq's Kurdistan region,— The Turkish army engaged in fierce clashes on Friday with Kurdish fighters from the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) after a Turkish incursion into Iraqi Kurdistan territory from the areas of Julamerg and Çukurca, a statement by PKK, published by Firat news agency, said.

Turkish soldiers reportedly crossed into Iraqi Kurdistan border territory, entering villages located in Kurdistan Region's district of Amedi in Duhok province.

The military incursion came following several airstrikes carried out by the Turkish air force around 8:00 p.m. on Friday targeting suspected positions of the PKK in Amedi.

19 Turkish soldiers killed among troops crossing Çukurca border

"As many as 14 Turkish soldiers were killed in the clashes," Firat News Agency reported.

After crossing the border and moving on towards the Qela Bedewê area, Turkish soldiers entered a location where PKK militants had laid explosive traps before. 5 Turkish soldiers have been killed in the ambush here.

"The Turkish army attempted to advance, but they have been blocked," it added, saying that Turkish warplanes resumed their bombardment on Saturday.

Since July 2015, Turkey initiated a controversial military **campaign** against the PKK in the country's southeastern Kurdish region after Ankara ended a two-year ceasefire agreement. Since the beginning of the campaign, Ankara has imposed several round-the-clock curfews, preventing civilians from fleeing regions where the military operations are being conducted.

Activists have accused the Turkish security forces of causing huge destruction to urban centres and killing Kurdish civilians.

In March 2017, the Turkish security forces **accused by UN** of committing serious abuses during operations against Kurdish militants in the nation's southeast.

The PKK took up arms in 1984 against the Turkish state, which still denies the constitutional existence of Kurds, to push for greater autonomy for the Kurdish minority who make up around **22.5 million** of the country's 79-million population.

A large Kurdish community in Turkey and worldwide openly sympathise with PKK rebels and Abdullah Ocalan, who founded the PKK group in 1974, and has a high symbolic value for most Kurds in Turkey and worldwide according to observers.

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