

Update on the Redeployment of Iraqi Security Forces to Federal Installations in Kirkuk Province

In accordance with the orders of the Commander-in-Chief Dr. Haider Al-Abadi, the Joint Operations Command of the Iraqi Security Forces commenced the redeployment of units of the Iraqi Army, Counter-Terrorism Service, Emergency Response Division, and the Federal Police to federal installations, military bases and vital infrastructure in Kirkuk province in the early hours of today, 16 October, 2017.

These orders aim to reimpose federal authority in the province, to uphold the constitution and unity of the country, and to protect the nation's citizens and resources. The Commander-in-Chief issued strict orders to prioritize the safety of civilians in Kirkuk and avoid confrontations. The redeployment of federal security forces in Kirkuk province is a legal and constitutional measure taken in coordination with the local security forces. The Government of Iraq has exercised the utmost caution and care in avoiding any clashes in restoring federal authority and strives to prevent the outbreak of violence despite ill-intentions by party militias outside the Kirkuk security structure.

Despite clear communications by the Government of Iraq on the redeployment of federal forces, there is a concerted misinformation campaign by elements in the Kurdish region to cover up their sinister actions in attempting to disrupt the coordinated and professional movements of the Iraqi Security Forces. The outline below clarifies the redeployment:

1. The Joint Operations Command carefully planned and coordinated the return of federal forces to Kirkuk province with local security forces in Kirkuk in advance of today's movements.
2. The Government of Iraq communicated to local officials in Kirkuk the redeployment plan, ensuring good coordination with Iraqi Security Forces.
3. Yesterday night regional party militias from outside the Kirkuk province security apparatus began mass movements towards Kirkuk in an attempt to disrupt this carefully coordinated redeployment.

4. As Iraqi Security Forces commenced carrying out their orders, these party militias began to harass and obstruct federal forces and in some instances fired upon them in an attempt to provoke the armed forces and cause an outbreak of conflict.
5. The Joints Operations Command followed the strict orders of the Commander-in-Chief in avoiding confrontations and to act only in self-defence where necessary.
6. Despite warnings to desist from their aggressive actions, the party militias escalated the situation by deploying medium and heavy fire towards federal forces leading to unfortunate and unnecessary conflicts in southern Kirkuk province.
7. The Government of Iraq attempted to reinforce the coordinated redeployment plan in the most peaceful manner and to work with the local security forces in doing so and largely overcame the disruptive and criminal behaviour of some party militias.
8. Self-serving former officials in and outside of Kirkuk spread panic, fear and misinformation among citizens in an attempt to force a confrontation with Iraqi Security Forces.
9. All responsibility for violence that occurred falls solely on party officials in Erbil and Kirkuk who gamble with the lives of our citizens to further their personal agendas at the expense of the security and welfare of this nation.
10. The redeployment is moving forward and the Government of Iraq calls on civilians and security officials to work with federal forces to ensure a successful and peaceful end to the movements of the federal forces.

The Iraqi Security Forces are acting within the framework of the constitution and orders of the Commander-in-Chief in redeploying to federal facilities they were previously based in up until 2014. All comments from regional party officials contrary to the above are false.