

The Kurdistan Regional Government attempts to downplay recent Turkish attacks against Kurds in Northern Iraq

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In a recent press meeting in the city of Erbil (Hewler) in Iraqi Kurdistan, the prime minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) downplayed the recent attacks by the Turkish military in the Kurdistan federal region. The Kurdish PM, Mr. Nechirvan Barzani, answered questions from the press and commented on the recent invasion by the Turkish military in the northern most part of the Kurdistan federal region. Barzani made surprising comments that civilians had not been affected by the attacks when several different media reports indicate otherwise.

Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani said that recent attacks by the Turkish military had not affected more than some bridges and other structures. Barzani stated that the Turkish military had not attacked the civilian population but vowed that the KRG would defend the region if such an event were to take place.

Barzani's comments came across very lightly as several news media reports and even footage of the region has clearly shown civilian areas to have been damaged by Turkish air assaults.

The Turkish military conducted ground operations this week resulting in heavy clashes between military units and Kurdish rebels. Although no reports have stated that ground operations targeted any civilians, it has been reported that Kurdish villages continue to be destroyed by air assaults and that civilians have indeed suffered some casualties. Although the targeting of villages by Turkish air assaults is nothing new and has been particularly a problem since November 2007, attacks on civilian villages have been intensified in recent weeks.

In the press meeting, several different reporters asked the prime minister about the KRG position on the recent attacks in the region by the Turkish military. Although Barzani did stay firm on the statement that any attacks on the larger population would result in intervention by the Peshmerga Armed Forces of the KRG, he appeared to downplay the actual attack by the Turkish military.

The Kurdish public remains curious about the intentions of the downplaying of such events. In the meantime, Turkish strikes on both rebel targets and the civilian population continue in the region.

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