

Turkish Choppers Airdrop Elite Soldiers over Northern Iraq, Big Battle Looming

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On Wednesday, at least 16 Turkish soldiers were killed-in-action as the PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party) and Turkish Armed Forces battled it out on both sides of the border between Iraq and Turkey.

Just one day after the Kurdish independence referendum resulted in a resounding “yes”, the Turkish Air Force sent its ‘Sikorsky’ choppers into northern Iraq and airdropped hundreds of elite troops over the Barzan region. At 5.00 on Wednesday morning, firefights then broke out at the Xwede, Koordine, Bayrak hills while PKK militants near the village of Adil Beg came under heavy fire from Cobra-type helicopters, howitzers and mortars.

Although casualties were claimed by both parties, Al-Masdar News was unable to confirm the death toll on either side following the clashes.

This development is significant as both [Ankara and Baghdad have opposed the Kurdish referendum](#), even threatening to intervene militarily if the self-declared Kurdish Government follows through.

Meanwhile in southeastern Turkey, fresh clashes erupted in Hakkari province where two Turkish armored vehicles were immobilized in the Çele district on September 25. This overnight PKK raid led to the death of 12 soldiers while 6 others sustained serious injuries. On the other hand, at least 3 Kurdish insurgents were shot dead during their hit-and-run attack.

Elsewhere in the same governorate, PKK guerrillas assassinated two Turkish soldiers atop the Baye hill in the Yüksekova district on September 26, prompting the Turkish Army to bombard suspected insurgent positions throughout Wednesday.

In the same time, a third soldier was shot dead by a PKK sniper on the Kurê Mızgeftê hill and a fourth Turkish soldier killed by an ambush near the village of Xacina.

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