

Turkish troops press on in northern Iraq

by UPI

ANKARA, Turkey -- Turkish ground and air forces kept up their targeting of the rebel Kurdistan Workers Party for the sixth day of cross-border fighting in northern Iraq. "The air and ground operations are going on," government spokesman Cemil Cicek said during a news briefing. "Our target is the PKK terrorist organization, not the Iraqis. We do not have other thoughts or authorization." Cicek didn't provide a time frame for Turkish troops to withdraw, the Turkish Daily News reported Tuesday. "Our troops will return as soon as the objective of the operation is achieved," he said. Turkish army officials said it has killed 153 members of the rebel group also known by the initials PKK. The PKK claims it has killed 81 Turkish soldiers but Turkish officials said the number is 15, the Kuwaiti news agency KUNA reported. Iraq has expressed concern that a prolonged border battle could spark clashes between Turkish troops and Iraqi Kurdish Peshmerga security forces, the country's national security adviser said Tuesday. The PKK is designated a terrorist organization by the U.S. State Department.

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