

Reports: Turkey attacking Kurds in Iraq

by UPI

ANKARA, Turkey -- Turkey's National Security Council met Wednesday as reports emerged its military was staging airstrikes on rebel Kurdish bases inside Iraq. The Zaman and Yeni Safak newspapers said raids by helicopters and F-16 fighter-bombers had been stepped up as far as 30 miles into Iraq since Sunday, when rebels killed 12 soldiers and wounded 16 others in a raid inside Turkey. Eight Turkish soldiers were missing after the attack, Euronews reported. The international community has asked Turkey to exercise restraint in crossing into Iraq but Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan is under enormous pressure domestically to put down the invasions by the Kurdish rebels from the Kurdistan Workers Party, known by its Kurdish-language initials of PKK, the report said. In Irbil, the capital of Iraq's northern Kurdish region, regional President Massud Barzani issued a statement denouncing the rebels' tactics, Alalam Satellite TV reported. "We call upon the PKK to eliminate violence and armed struggle as a mode of operation," Barzani said. The group has been seeking its own state, to be carved from parts of Iraq and Turkey, for 25 years. At least 40,000 people have been killed by associated violence, a correspondent for Russia's Novosti news agency reported.

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