
Kirkuk: Both sides must talk to avoid an escalation of violence

Alarmed by the reports coming from Kirkuk, the Chair of the Subcommittee on Human Rights, Mr Pier Antonio Panzeri (S&D, IT) made the following statement:

"Just weeks after Kurds voted overwhelmingly for an independent Kurdistan, Kirkuk has become a territory disputed between the government in Baghdad and the Iraqi Kurdistan Region. The Iraqi army has advanced towards Kirkuk, thousands of Kurds have already fled the city and there are even reports of terrible crimes being committed against the population of Kirkuk and the neighbouring villages.

All parties must make sure that the civilian population does not fall victim to violent clashes. I therefore welcome the efforts of Prime Minister Abadi to de-escalate tensions by ordering a withdrawal of all armed groups in Kirkuk, including the sectarian Popular Mobilisation Militias (PMU), and the handover of security to local police and counterterrorism units.

Kirkuk is in almost equal parts home to Kurds, Arabs and Turkmen and also has around 10 % Christians. Making sure that the city's different factions are able to live peacefully together is one of the greatest challenges of the moment".


Further information


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