

# Iran's war with Kurdish Independence may be underway in disputed Kirkuk

by Jerry Gordon



It pays to have knowledgeable social media contacts to get the truth about Iran's war against Kurdish independence.

Last night I received a post from US Army Brig. General (ret.) Ernie Audino who has deep connections with the Peshmerga and Kurdish Regional Government as a result of liaison during the Second Gulf War. We had interviewed Audino for the *New English Review* published in December 2015. See: "[No War Against ISIS Without the Kurds](#)": an interview with US Army Brig. Gen. (ret.) Ernie Audino. Audino had been in Erbil just prior to the September 25, 2017 Independence Referendum had met with an interviewed both Peshmerga and Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) figures



General Qassem Soleimani of Iran's Quds Force

He had sent out an alarm in his post last night regarding the provocative movement towards Kirkuk of Iraqi Shia Hashd al-Shaabi Popular Mobilization Force, under the control of Iranian Quds Force commander, General Qassem Soleimani with Iraqi National Army US supplied M1-tanks.

Audino had sent out this [unconfirmed report](#) of the combined PMF-Iraqi National Army force mobilized for a possible attack on Kirkuk:

UPDATE (2050 hrs, Eastern USA): Reports that Hashd intends to orient toward the NOC and K1 military base inside Kirkuk. Here is a report (unconfirmed) of enemy units moving toward attack positions near Bashir on the south side of Kirkuk:

Iranian backed Popular Mobilization Units:

Al Badr brigade

Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq (in police uniforms)

PMU Brigade 20th

Khorasan units

Tafoof Units

&

Federal Police

Brigade 20th

Anti Terror brigade

Armor (Tank) brigade of 9th division of the Iraqi Army.

I immediately reposted it to my Facebook page and shared it widely. That caught the attention of Facebook friend Penina Sarah, who also has deep Iraqi Kurdish and Israeli expert connections. I had alerted Lisa Benson who had contacted me about Iran and President Trump's pending decision regarding possible decertification of the Iranian nuclear deal, the JCPOA. She in turn found video of PMF forces in the vicinity of the disputed Kirkuk frontier on Twitter Kurdish feed.

A check of the Rudaw news site last night revealed a [comment](#)

about Iran's threat to an independent Kurdistan by former US Ambassador to Iraq and Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad warned of an imminent clash seeking possible US intervention:

Responding on Twitter to news Wednesday night that Iraqi forces, including the Iranian-backed Shiite Hashd al-Shaabi, were preparing for a "major attack" on Kurdistan, Zalmay Khalilzad, former US ambassador to Iraq, said Iranian Quds commander Qassem Soleimani is in Iraq, pushing the Shiite forces to attack Kirkuk.

"Active US engagement needed to prevent conflict," he stated.

Then [news](#) came from Rudaw this morning about Peshmerga command taking action to thwart the combined PMF-Iraqi National Army force : "Peshmerga Command: 'foreign -backed' Iraqi army, Shiite forces prepare to attack Kirkuk." Rudaw reported:

The Peshmerga General Command has said that the Iraqi army and its allied mainly Shiite Hashd al-Shaabi have been preparing to attack areas outside the oil-rich city of Kirkuk since Thursday night with "foreign backing."

It carries "dangerous indications for war and aggression against Kurdistan," the Peshmerga Command said in a statement Friday morning.

It said that while they call for a peaceful solution to the issues between Erbil and Baghdad, they warn the international community and the US-led Global Coalition that they believe the current situation points to a "big catastrophe" if the war breaks out.

It said that Peshmerga "will strongly defend the people of Kurdistan, and will not allow the Kurdistan be treated with the languages of forces and threats.

Security officials have told Rudaw that they withdrew from

some positions south of Kirkuk voluntarily to strengthen their lines of defense against any potential advances by the Iraqi army and the Hashd al-Shaabi.

Iraq's Joint of Command has denied that it launched an operation south of Kirkuk. It said they are still clearing the liberated areas they took from the ISIS militants as part of their Hawija operation that concluded earlier this week.

The Peshmerga command said there are dangerous indications for an imminent attack on Kurdistan.

This Rudaw news flash confirmed the post we received last night from US Army General (ret.) Ernie Audino that the Iraqi Shia Hashd al-Shaabi was on the move with Iraqi National Army tank support threatening the disputed area of Kirkuk. That 'foreign backed support' is evident in reports of the presence of Iranian Quds Force commander General Qassem Soleimani with the PMF. The US military liaison with the KRG and Iraqi Forces are doubtless aware of this threat. So are the Russians who have entered into agreements for the development of Kirkuk oil fields controlled by the KRG since 2014, when the Iraqi National Army collapsed and fled during the ISIS Blitz capturing Mosul.

Penina Sarah weighed in sending an alleged Arabic language document that she had received from an Iraqi Sunni contact that appeared to be communication from Quds Force commander to former Iraqi Premier al-Maliki. She had shared that with Dr. Mordechai Kedar in Israel who said it could be a fake as it was "too straight forward."

We sent that to Audino who was able to independently translate it. He noted "it asks Maliki to support Iran by going to the Jordanian border and fomenting trouble and anarchy in Mosul." While Audino also said it may be a fake, he further commented, "the basic premise is plausible and a known motivation for Tehran. Nothing new here, even if true."

When I asked him how dangerous the PMF was -Iran controlled threat to Kirkuk, Audino replied, "dangerous of course, but their Shia will to fight for Kirkuk pales in comparison to the Kurdish will to defend their soil. The Kurds will NEVER give this up. As they say, 'Kirkuk is our Quds, Kirkuk is our Jerusalem.'" To which we responded, just as we Jews consider Jerusalem the center of the ancient and modern State of Israel. An Israel under PM Netanyahu who supports an independent Kurdistan.

Stay tuned for more on this developing story.