

# Sinjar: the Next Battleground

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What's happening on the borders with Turkey is not unexpected development, the next battle is going to be over Sinjar and not in those border areas. Kurdistan region has 330 km borders with Turkey. 190km in Dohuk and 140km in Erbil. Prior 2003, PKK's presence was along 55km from Zakho (northwest of Dohuk) to Kani Masi (sub-district in Dohuk) which is geographically is difficult area. But after 2003, PKK has expanded its presence towards Sinjar.

During Saddam's era in 1980s both Iraqi and Turkish defense ministers had signed understandings over crossing borders to chase the wanted groups which each country can cross borders about 10km. And they had agreed if they have to cross more than 10km then have to inform each other and the intervention should not last for more than 3 days. For this collaboration 15 Iraqi officers at that time stationed in Diarbakir (southeast of Turkey) at the 7<sup>th</sup> Turkish army division base to collaborate with them during military intervention. And what's happening now on the borders is similar like old days deal between Iraq and Turkey. The future battle will be over Sinjar and nature of this war will be the regional war. The silk road from Kermanshah (west of Iran), Kalar and Kifri (southwest of Suleimaniyah) , Tuz Khurmatu (south of Kirkuk), A'alam sub-district in north of Saladin, and from behind Talul area, Hazar (south of Mosul) , Tel afar and Sinjar to Iraq-Syria border and from there reaches Lebanon and Mediterranean sea. Now from Tel Afar to Zummar, Shela and Syrian border (which on the right side Talul, Hazar and Tel Afar these are agricultural areas) in both right and left sides of these areas along with 50km from each side the land been divided to family members of PMF in order to make demographic changes in these areas.

Turkey's concerns are related to several reasons:

-Sinjar is the connecting bridge between Qandil and northeast Syria for PKK.

-Some of the Yazidis have joined PKK and those did not, PKK has created other forces for them. And these groups receives financial support and weapons from PMF.

Although the issue is bigger than this and now there are many different forces present in Sinjar that some of them carries ballistic missile. Sinjar is 780km distance from Tel Aviv but Iran has missiles can reach more than 1200km. and distance between Sinjar and others areas in the region as below:

To Latakia (west of Syria) where there is the Russian military air base is 535km distance.

To the American base in al-Tanf (southeast of Syria) is 220km.

To American Ain al- Asad base in Anbar is 305km. to Dohuk 123km and to Qamishli 80km and dominates over Erbil.

Through Sinjar Iran can make pressure on Turkey and Kurdistan region. Once Qasim Soleimani before he was killed told PMF groups that Sinjar is like the chair of Imam Ali.

Recently when both Iraqi forces and Peshmera agreed to reactivate cooperation joint centers in the liberated areas, now some of these operations centers reopened except the one in Mosul because PMF groups do not the Sinjar agreement to be implemented. The main struggle is over Sinjar, not other areas.