

## **Resistance Against ISIS: The Kurds Have Apparently Retaken the Mosul Reservoir Dam**

The Iraqi Kurds have scored successes in their struggle against the terror group “The Islamic State.” With the support of the U.S. Air Force they claim to have recaptured the largest dam in the country.

Baghdad: In early August the terror militia “Islamic State” (IS) brought the largest Iraqi dam, near the city of Mosul, under their control. Now the Kurdish fighters have apparently taken it back. Peshmerga groups, with the support of the U.S. Air Force, are attacking a number of IS positions around the structure, as reported by the independent Iraqi news website Al-Sumaria News. The troops should have 80 percent of the dam under control and the IS militia have suffered “great losses,” the Kurdish news outlet Rudaw has reported. According to both media organizations, the fighting is continuing. The AFP news agency is reporting the retaking of the dam, the information coming from a Kurdish officer and two representatives of Kurdish political parties.

The conquest of the dam would be of the greatest strategic significance. The IS took control of the dam and with it gained control of the supply of water and electricity for a large part of the country. Had the Islamic extremists succeeded in breaching the wall of the dam, the metropolis of Mosul and its tens of thousands of inhabitants would have been threatened by a tidal wave.

In the recent fighting around the dam north of the second largest Iraqi city, several jihadis were killed, said Kurdish Lieutenant General Abdul Rahman Korini. The Kurdish Peshmerga militias were supported in their offensive from the air by U.S. fighter aircraft and on the ground by the Iraqi army.

### **Sunni Tribes Repulse IS Fighters**

According to Korini, the further advance of the IS fighters was being monitored by Sunni jihadis from the village of Kayf, about a hundred kilometers east of the dam. This offensive is slowing. The way there is, however, riddled with booby traps laid by the jihadi fighters. This offensive is being slowed by these traps.

On Sunday alone, American forces conducted nine air attacks in the vicinity of the dam, according to U.S. sources. In the attack, U.S. fighter jets and drones destroyed several armored personnel carriers and military vehicles of the “Islamic State.” On Sunday, these fighters and unmanned drones successfully carried out 14 strikes against the IS. An IS strong point and a series of armored vehicles were destroyed, among other targets.

In the Iraqi province of Anbar west of Baghdad, armed members of more than 25 Sunni tribes, with support from the security forces, continued their resistance Friday against the jihadis. According to police, they drove IS-fighters from areas west of the provincial capital of Ramadi.

### **Foreign Minister Steinmeier Announces a “Message of Solidarity”**

On Saturday, Federal Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier (SPD) paid a visit to Iraq and promised support for the people of this country in crisis. At a meeting with Iraqi Foreign Minister Hussein al-Scharistani, he said it was time for a “message of solidarity.” According to “Bild am Sonntag,” Steinmeier meanwhile rejected an independent Kurdish state in northern Iraq. This would “further destabilize the region and cause new tensions,” he said.

In an interview with the ARD “Tagesthemen” on Sunday night, Steinmeier said he was no longer ruling out further arms supplies to the Kurds. There are “no risk-free decisions,” he said. In the long term the solution to the Iraq conflict must be political. SPD chief Sigmar Gabriel also came out in support of supplying arms to Iraq. We cannot stand back and watch thousands of innocent people get slaughtered while their defenders lack the effective means to defend them,” said the vice-chancellor to Der Spiegel.

#### Yazidis Are Being Trained to Fight

To further support their struggle against the IS the Kurds have meanwhile trained hundreds of Yazidis. On Sunday, the Kurdish militia YPG announced that a number of camps would be set up in Syria for training members of the religious minority who have been persecuted by IS fighters in neighboring Iraq. A photographer for the news agency Reuters who visited one of the camps not far from the border with Iraq saw, by his account, more than 50 Yazidis who were trained to handle assault rifles and grenades.

In recent days several hundred Yazidis have been trained, said the YPG spokesman. More and more volunteers are reporting for duty. The YPG is an armed group that has several areas in the north of Syria civil war country under their control. Tens of thousands of Yazidis have fled from the IS-fighters to Mount Sinjar. The Islamists have killed hundreds of them, according to unconfirmed reports. .

#### Air Attacks of the Syrian Army

While the U.S. Air Force supports the Iraqi Kurds, the Syrian Air Force on Sunday flew at least 41 attacks against IS positions. The Syrian regime launched 36 attacks, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, in the northeastern province of Al-Rakka. In these engagements at least 31 jihadis have been killed.

Al-Rakka is considered the “capital” of the self-proclaimed Caliphate of militant Islamists. It was from Al-Rakka that the jihadist militia began their attack on Iraq. In early August, IS fighters drove the last Syrian troops from Al-Rakka.