

## Seven Kurdish separatists killed in Turkey

Seven Kurdish separatists were killed in clashes with Turkish soldiers in south-east Turkey, bringing the toll from two days of fighting near the border with Iraq to 19, the Turkish General Staff announced Wednesday.

The clashes took place Tuesday night in Bestler and Dereber districts of Sirnak, according to the General Staff.

On Monday night nine Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) guerrillas and three Turkish soldiers were killed in fighting in the same region.

Five Turkish soldiers were also injured during the fighting Monday night.

Turkish troops have been carrying out operations inside Turkey following the ending of 'Operation Gunes' Feb 29, which saw up to 10,000 soldiers sent across the border to seek out Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) rebels and their camps.

According to the Turkish military, 240 PKK fighters, 24 Turkish soldiers and three state-employed village guards were killed in the weeklong operation.

Ankara blames the separatist group for the deaths of more than 32,000 people since the early 1980s when the PKK began its fight for independence or autonomy for the mainly Kurdish-populated southeast of Turkey.

The PKK is listed by the US and the European Union as a terrorist group.

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