

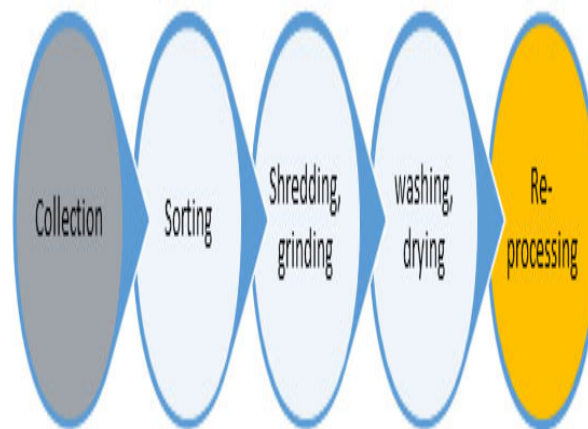
Kurdistan Independence Vote

Why in news?

\n\n

Iraqi Kurds have planned to go ahead with a proposed referendum on seceding from Iraq.

\n\n



\n\n

Who are the Kurds?

\n\n

\n\n

- \n
 - Kurds constitute the fourth largest ethnic group in West Asia but don't have a nation of their own.
- \n
 - They are scattered in various countries and are a considerable minority in Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria.
- \n
 - They have historically been oppressed by their respective governments which has fueled the desire for establishing a Kurdish nation that encompasses the Kurdish regions different countries.

- \n
- In Turkey, Kurdish rebels are involved in a civil war for secession, while in Syria they have already established a regional government.
- \n
- As Baghdad is weakened by IS, Kurds have used the situation to enhance the territory under their control.
- \n
- Currently, Iraqi Kurds are planning a referendum on secession on their own.
- \n

\n\n

What have been the reactions to the referendum?

\n\n

- \n
- The Iraqi Supreme Court has already asked the Kurdistan Regional Government to suspend the vote, till its legality is settled.
- \n
- Although a Yes in the referendum doesn't guarantee secession, it has been perceived as a message to the outside world reiterating that there is popular support for independence.
- \n
- Kurds are an important partner for Baghdad in the fight against the IS, with the U.S. also treating the Peshmerga forces as an ally.
- \n
- The move by the Iraqi Kurds is being viewed with alarm by the Turkish and Iranian regimes.
- \n
- Turkey has in the past treated Kurdish demands for minority rights such as recognition of their language, let alone autonomy, as secessionist.
- \n
- Iran is also fighting a minor insurgency by kurds in the mountains of its northern region and has recently closed its eastern borders in the light of the referendum .
- \n
- Bashar al-Assad regime in Syria remains tactically silent on the matter for now.
- \n
- So the referendum has geopolitical ramifications
- \n

\n\n

What is the current political status of Iraqi Kurds?

\n\n

\n

- Iraqi Kurds were granted some autonomy after 1991 when a regional government was constituted at Erbil.

\n

- In recent years, both Baghdad and Erbil cooperated in the fight against the Islamic State.

\n

- Although independence remains the proclaimed goal of Iraqi Kurds, Mr.Barzani - who heads the regional administration at Erbil, has often personally signalled a compromise.

\n

- While Baghdad has chosen to ignore such gestures, the current developments makes restarting negotiations essential.

\n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: The Hindu

\n

