



On July 15, 2017, members of the Babylon Brigade – a Shi'a Arab dominated Hashed al-Sha'bi force – seized one truck and weapons from Nineveh Plain Protection Units (NPU) at an NPU facility in Bakhdede. Babylon Brigade fighters, supported by other Hashed al-Sha'bi Shi'a Arab forces, approached the NPU facility in great numbers and used more than 10 vehicles, including technicals and Humvees, to overwhelm the half-dozen NPU soldiers present.

At the time of the incident NPU soldiers were deployed almost in full. The NPU was providing security and support to Iraq's Minister of Construction, Housing, Municipalities and Public Works as well as security and support to PMU and other ISF leadership present in the Nineveh Plain. The Babylon Brigade deliberately chose to move when the NPU was deployed.

Just days earlier, NPU forces arrested members of the Babylon Brigade involved in theft of ancient artifacts and other crimes. The NPU handed these criminals over to relevant government authorities to face justice. This attack on the NPU was apparently a reprisal for the NPU's efforts to safeguard Assyrian historical heritage by an entity engaged in criminal activity.

The other Shi'a Arab forces that entered Bakhdede to support the Babylon Brigade force in attacking the NPU has been expelled. The remaining Babylon Brigade force involved in the incident is being detained and face an investigation ordered by Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi that may result in the permanent expulsion of the Babylon Brigade from the area. The stolen truck and weapons have been returned to the NPU. The NPU is continuing to fulfill its mission of securing the Nineveh Plain, and NPU soldiers continue to fulfill their mission and purpose despite grave risks and serious challenges.

On July 14, 2017, the NPU leadership announced the commencement of plans to build a full base in the vicinity of Bakhdede. The NPU needs the support of the Assyrian Diaspora in fulfilling its mission. This incident underscores the urgency of the NPU's mission.

The Nineveh Plain Defense Fund (NPDF) was established to facilitate the legal and effective support of the NPU. Support of the NPU by the Diaspora is essential now as the NPU clearly demonstrates that it furthers law and order, supports activities allowing for the return of our people, and in this case, is even helping preserve our cultural heritage in our Homeland.

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