

SYNOPSIS :

Three weeks in Mosul with the Iraqi army

Photographs by **Edouard BEAU**
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This report made inside Iraqi force, predominantly Kurdish, reflects the difficulty to control this city, which is everyday the target of new attacks.

In November 2007, as the Turkish army mass on the edge of northern Iraq to fight PKK*, I managed to cross the Turkish border that is closed to journalists. I pretended to be a trader in chickens. A few days later, I will be pushed back at the imposing check-point that bars the entry of Mosul. The government of the Kurdish region does not issue accreditation for journalists in this city. After several days of negotiations, I managed to join the unit on the outskirts of Mosul. I will spend one month sharing the daily life of these men who, to feed their families, risk their lives when they leave their barracks.

To reach a base, the armed forces bypass the inner city. The various armed groups who have fled Baghdad to reorganize in this city pose roadside bombs and have snipers in the city. Searching homes for suspects or weapons remains the only solution. The soldiers often find old rifles and release the suspects for lack of evidence. This report reflects the difficulty in controlling the city facing an invisible enemy.

* (Kurdish: *Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan* or PKK, also called KADEK, Kongra-Gel, and KGK) The Kurdistan Workers' Party is a militant Kurdish organization founded in the 1970s and led by Abdullah Öcalan until his capture in 1999. The PKK's ideology was founded on revolutionary Marxism-Leninism and Kurdish nationalism.