

On September 25, a referendum was held in the Kurdish Autonomous Region of Iraq on the independence of this national territorial entity. Voting took place within the autonomy itself, as well as in adjacent Iraqi governorates of Diyala, Nineveh and Taamim, which are controlled by Kurdish armed groups.

According to preliminary results, more than 90 per cent of ballots were cast in favour of independence. Final results are expected to be announced on September 28.

In connection with the referendum in the Kurdish Autonomous Region, Russia emphasises the need to avoid anything that could further complicate and destabilise the already conflict-ridden Middle Eastern region. We maintain our unwavering commitment to the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of the friendly Iraq and other Middle Eastern states.

Moscow respects the national aspirations of the Kurds. We believe that all disputes that may exist between the Iraqi federal government and the government of the Kurdish Autonomous Region can and should be resolved through constructive and respectful dialogue with a view to devising a mutually acceptable formula of coexistence within a single Iraqi state.