

Helicopter Accident in Syria Hurt 22 Soldiers, Says US, Reminding World of Its Illegal Presence in the Country

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Global Research, June 15, 2023

[Morning Star](#) 13 June 2023

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#), [USA](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#), [Terrorism](#)

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The Pentagon said today that a helicopter accident in northern Syria had hurt 22 of its soldiers.

The cause of the accident was under investigation and no enemy fire was involved, the US military added.

Over 900 US troops remain in Syria, supposedly to "advise and assist" the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), which control regions in the north-west.

The US government says its forces are there to prevent any revival of the Islamic State terrorist group, which took over large parts of Syria and Iraq in 2014. Its presence is opposed by the Syrian government and illegal under international law.

Damascus says the real reason for maintaining a US troop presence is to steal Syrian oil, with oil production concentrated in areas that remain outside government control.

Last year, it said 83 per cent of Syrian oil production was being appropriated by the US or US-backed armed opposition groups, much of it taken in tanker convoys to US military bases in Iraq, with the oil ministry accusing the US of taking 66,000 barrels of Syrian oil every day in the first half of 2022.

Though the US denies that oil reserves influence its decision to stay in Syria, in 2020 US company Delta Crescent Energy secured an oil concession in the area with the approval of the SDF but not of the Syrian government.

In 2019, then-president Donald Trump declared that the US military was in Syria "only for

the oil,” prompting frantic denials by administration officials.

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Featured image: US 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment troops conduct area reconnaissance in Syria, 18 February 202. Wikipedia

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