

Islamic State (ISIS-Daesh) Exacts Revenge on Turkey for Selling Al-Baghdadi Out

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A [carbomb exploded](#) [1] in northern Syria killing 13 and wounding 20. The blast on Saturday ripped through a crowded market in Tal Abyad, a town recently occupied by Turkish-backed militant proxies. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the blast targeted pro-Turkey fighters and civilians were also among the dead.

Even though the Turkish Defense Ministry promptly laid the finger of blame on Turkey's arch-foe, the Kurdish YPG militia, without conducting an investigation, car bombing as a tactic for causing widespread fear is generally employed by jihadist groups and not by the Kurds.

It's important to note in the news coverage about the killing of al-Baghdadi that although the mainstream media had been trumpeting for the last several years that the Islamic State's fugitive chief had been hiding somewhere on the Iraq-Syria border in the east, he was found hiding in the northwestern Idlib governorate, under the control of Turkey's militant proxies and al-Nusra Front, and was killed while trying to flee to Turkey in Barisha village five kilometers from the border.

The morning after the night raid, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights [reported](#) [2] on Sunday, October 27, that a squadron of eight helicopters accompanied by warplanes belonging to the international coalition had attacked positions of Hurras al-Din, an al-Qaeda-affiliated group, in Idlib province where the Islamic State chief was believed to be hiding.

According to "[official version](#)" [3] of Washington's story regarding the killing of al-Baghdadi, the choppers took off from an American airbase in Erbil, the capital of Iraqi Kurdistan, flew hundreds of miles over the enemy territory in the airspace controlled by the Syrian and Russian air forces, killed the self-proclaimed "caliph" of the Islamic State in a Hollywood-style special-ops raid, and took the same route back to Erbil along with the dead body of the "caliph" and his belongings.

Although Washington has conducted several airstrikes in Syria's Idlib in the past, those were carried out by fixed-wing aircraft that fly at high altitudes, and the aircraft took off from American airbases in Turkey, which is just across the border from Syria's northwestern Idlib province. Why would Washington take the risk of flying its troops at low altitudes in helicopters over the hostile territory controlled by myriads of Syria's heavily armed militant outfits?

In fact, several Turkish journalists, including Rajip Soylu, the Turkey correspondent for the Middle East Eye, [tweeted](#) [4] on the night of the special-ops raid that the choppers took off from the American airbase in Turkey's Incirlik. As for al-Baghdadi, who was "hiding" with the

blessing of Turkey, it now appears that he was the bargaining chip in the negotiations between Trump and Erdogan, and the quid for the US president's agreeing to pull out of Syria was the pro quo that Erdogan would hand Baghdadi to him on a silver platter.

After the betrayal of its erstwhile allies, the Islamic jihadists, by the Erdogan administration, a tidal wave of terrorism in Turkey was expected, and its first installment has apparently been released in the form of a car bombing in Tal Abyad in northern Syria occupied by Turkish-backed militant proxies.

The reason why the Trump administration is bending over backwards to appease Ankara is that Turkish President Erdogan has been drifting away from Washington's orbit into Russia's sphere of influence. Even though the Kurds too served the imperialist masters loyally for the last five years of Syria's proxy war, the choice boiled down to choosing between the Kurds and Turkey, and Washington understandably chose its NATO ally.

Turkey, which has the second largest army in NATO, has been cooperating with Russia in Syria against Washington's interests for the last several years and has also placed an order for the Russian-made S-400 missile system, whose first installment has already been delivered.

In order to understand the significance of relationship between Washington and Ankara, it's worth noting that the United States has been conducting airstrikes against targets in Syria from the Incirlik airbase and around fifty American B-61 hydrogen bombs have also been deployed there, whose safety became a matter of real concern during the foiled July 2016 coup plot against the Erdogan administration; when the commander of the Incirlik airbase, General Bekir Ercan Van, along with nine other officers were arrested for supporting the coup; movement in and out of the base was denied, power supply was cut off and the security threat level was raised to the highest state of alert, according to [a report](#)[5] by Eric Schlosser for the New Yorker.

Perceptive readers who have been keenly watching Erdogan's behavior since the foiled July 2016 coup plot against the Erdogan administration must have noticed that Erdogan has committed quite a few reckless and impulsive acts during the last few years.

Firstly, the Turkish air force shot down a Russian Sukhoi Su-24 fighter jet on the border between Syria and Turkey on 24 November 2015 that brought the Turkish and Russian armed forces to the brink of a full-scale confrontation in Syria.

Secondly, the Russian ambassador to Turkey, Andrei Karlov, was assassinated at an art exhibition in Ankara on the evening of 19 December 2016 by an off-duty Turkish police officer, Mevlut Mert Altintas, who was suspected of being an Islamic fundamentalist.

Thirdly, the Turkish military mounted the seven-month Operation Euphrates Shield in northern Syria, immediately after the attempted coup plot, from August 2016 to March 2017 that brought the Turkish military and its Syrian militant proxies head-to-head with the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces and their American backers.

Fourthly, Ankara invaded Idlib in northwestern Syria in October 2017 on the pretext of enforcing a de-escalation zone between the Syrian militants and the Syrian government, despite official protest from Damascus that the Turkish armed forces were in violation of Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Fifthly, Turkey mounted Operation Olive Branch in the Kurdish-held enclave Afrin in northwestern Syria from January to March 2018.

And lastly, the Turkish armed forces and their Syrian jihadist proxies invaded and occupied 120 kilometers stretch of Syrian territory between the northern towns of Tal Abyad and Ras al-Ayn on October 9, even before the American forces had a chance to fully withdraw from their military bases in northern Syria, as soon as an understanding between Trump and Erdogan was reached in a telephonic conversation on October 6.

To avoid confrontation between myriads of local militant groups and their regional and international backers, Russia once again displayed the stroke of a genius by playing the role of a peace-maker in Syria, and concluded an agreement with Turkey in a Putin-Erdogan meeting in Sochi, Russia, on October 22 to enforce a “safezone” in northern Syria.

According to the terms of the agreement, Turkish forces would have exclusive control over 120 kilometers stretch between Tal Abyad and Ras al-Ayn to the depth of 32 kilometers in northern Syria. To the west and east of the aforementioned area of the Turkish Operation Peace Spring, Turkish troops and Russian military police would conduct joint patrols to the depth of 10 kilometers in the Syrian territory, and the remaining 20 kilometers “safe zone” would be under the control of Syrian government which would ensure that the Kurdish forces and weapons are evacuated from Manbij, Kobani and Tal Rifat to the west and the Kurdish areas to the east, excluding the city of Qamishli.

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Notes

- [1] [Car bomb explodes in Syrian town captured by Turkey from Kurds](#)
- [2] [Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi killed in US raid](#)
- [3] [Official story of the night raid killing al-Baghdadi](#)
- [4] [Trump Confirms ISIS Leader Al-Baghdadi Killed In US Raid](#)
- [5] [The HBombs in Turkey by Eric Schlosser](#)

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