

# Turkey Refuses to Give Up on Its Interests in Northeastern Syria

By [South Front](#)

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*Turkey and its proxies are rushing to defend Ankara’s interests in northeastern Syria.*

*After weeks of being on the back foot, with its oil traffickers being targeted, and Turkish proxy positions around Aleppo being struck repeatedly, the time to fight back has come.*

Before the incidents began, in order to coordinate its operations, Turkey established a “mega-base” next to the al-Bab al-Hawa crossing with the northwestern Syrian region of Greater Idlib.

[https://southfront.org/wp-content/uploads/video/19.03.21\\_IMR\\_Syria.mp4](https://southfront.org/wp-content/uploads/video/19.03.21_IMR_Syria.mp4)

As of March 17<sup>th</sup>, the base hosts 20 senior officers and 400 soldiers of the Turkish Armed Forces, 700 armored vehicles and personnel carriers, 100 battle tanks.

It is an impressive location, and it will be used as a hub for all convoys that will enter Syrian territory.

Three checkpoints are expected, and it will be continuously expanded.

With the support of the base, Turkish proxies have once again resumed active actions against both the Syrian Arab Army and the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

On March 18<sup>th</sup>, clashes broke out between the Syrian Arab Army (SAA) and the Turkish-backed Syrian National Army in the northern Aleppo countryside. Heavy machine guns were used in the clashes. The SAA and Turkish forces also exchanged artillery fire.

No casualties were reported. This could be a harbinger of what is to come, numerous pro-government and pro-opposition outlets have repeatedly said that the SAA is preparing a large-scale operation to oust Turkey from the parts of Aleppo it has been occupying since 2017.

Not too far away, in the Raqqah countryside, SDF reported that its fighters had repelled two attacks by Turkish proxies. The first was on the village of Saida west of Ain Issa. The second

attack targeted the town of Mu'alk to the east.

No specific casualty numbers were released.

The area around Ain Issa has been volatile for a while now, with Turkey and its proxies frequently attacking the town's outskirts. An Ankara plan to push and capture the town has been expected for months.

Likely in response to this, two rockets were launched from Syria towards the southern Turkish city of Kilis. According to Syrian sources, the two rockets were launched from the vicinity of the town of Tell Rifaat in the northern Aleppo countryside. The positions belong to the People's Protection Units (YPG), which Ankara considers terrorist. The YPG is also the core of the SDF.

The Turkish army shelled a dozen of towns and villages in response to the attack. Heavy clashes were also reported between Kurdish fighters and militants of the Turkish-backed Syrian National Army west of the Turkish-occupied town of al-Bab.

Turkish movements were expected, as there is no way it would forfeit cheap and easy-to-attain oil from Syria, and beyond. The Damascus government, and its Russian support, are of a different opinion.

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