

US-backed SDF Allegedly Seized Omar Oil Fields. But What Is Really Going On?

By [South Front](#)

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UPDATE 2: The SDF media wing released a new statement in English ([source](#)):

“Our forces carried out a large-scale military operation aimed at the concentration of mercenaries in the fields of Omar oil in the early hours of this morning (22 October 2017) in order to summon mercenaries and to miss the opportunity to commit acts of sabotage through their defeats in the liberated areas, Our forces, as a result, liberated the old fields of mercenaries and drove them out of the fields with little damage.

Our forces continue to hunt down their remnants who have taken refuge in the labor housing neighborhood adjacent to the fields where they are stationed in and protected by these buildings, while our forces clashed with them to expel them or eliminate them

Laila Al Abdullah, Official spokesperson for the Asefat AL-Jazeera campaign.”

To do so, the SDF had to cross the Khabur River and to capture al-Khurayzah, al-Maashiq, al-Qusayriyah and many nearby points. Only then, SDF units were able to enter the Omar oil fields.

Thus, the initial reports that the SDF could find a common ground with local ISIS members and to incorporate them into the ranks of “democratic forces” became more possible.

UPDATE 1: Reuters updated its article on the issue. Now, it quotes Lilwa al-Abdallah, one of the SDF spokespersons.

“Our forces managed to liberate the fields without notable damages,” Reuters quoted Lilwa al-Abdallah as saying.

The source of the quote [is this article released the SDF media wing](#). [Only in Arabic]

The Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) says the Omar oil fields are in hands of the SDF.

قوات سوريا الديمقراطية تسيطر بشكل كامل على حقول العمر النفطي أكبر حقول سوريا

— pyd rojava (@PYD_Rojava) [October 22, 2017](#)

Original Post:



According to the mainstream media and some pro-Kurdish sources, the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) seized the strategic Omar oil fields east of Deir Ezzor city on October 22.

REUTERS REPORTS ([source](#)):

The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) said they gained control of al-Omar oil field, one of Syria's largest, on the eastern bank of the Euphrates river.

With air strikes and special forces from the U.S.-led coalition, the SDF has been battling Islamic State in oil-rich Deir al-Zor, bordering Iraq. The SDF alliance of Kurdish and Arab militias has been focused on territory east of the river, which bisects the province.

The Syrian army, with Russian air power and Iran-backed militias, has been waging its own separate offensive against Islamic State militants, mostly to the west of the river.

The U.S.-led coalition and the Russian military have been holding deconfliction meetings - to prevent clashes between planes and troops - though the offensives have sometimes come into conflict.

Al-Omar oil field lies some 10 km (6.21 miles) north of the town of al-Mayadin, which government forces and their allies took earlier this month.

Reuters refers to some SDF statement in their article. However, the article released by the [SDF media wing](#) on the issue has been already deleted:



[The cached version of the SDF announcement can be found here](#). Screenshot:



Furthermore the video, which is aimed to confirm the advance, is fake:

The SDF supported by [@CJTFOIR](#) liberated al-Omar oil field, the largest oil field in Syria.

قسد تحرر حقل العمر، أكبر حقل نفط في سوريا. pic.twitter.com/t8X6hlc5aH

— Hammurabi's Justice (@Hammurabi_News) [October 22, 2017](#)

The video is old and shows the advance of Jabhat al-Nusra (the Syrian branch of al-Qaeda, now known as Hayat Tahrir al-Sham) and its allies in the area.



Meanwhile, the UK-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), a hard-core anti-

government media outlet, provides own version of the events.

According to SOHR, the Syrian army reached the vicinity of the oil fields from the southern direction after crossing the Euphrates near Mayadin, but was forced to retreat after the ISIS counter-attack. On the same time, the SDF entered the area from northwestern direction.

Thus, it's clear that the SDF "success" in the Omar oil fields area does not exist. The situation has few explanations:

1. The SDF and its media friends have decided to spread fake reports in an attempt to slow down the Syrian Army and its allies that also want to capture these oil fields. In this attempt, they just copy the approach implemented by the Kurdistan Regional Government in northern Iraq ([more here](#));
2. Some local ISIS members operating on the Omar oil fields area joined the SDF and the mainstream media now tries to hide the cooperation with ISIS in the area. In this case, ISIS in the Omar oil fields need some time to re-brand itself into "US-backed democratic fighters". The fake news reports about the SDF advance are needed to buy this time;
3. Some reconnaissance units of the SDF really entered the Omar oil fields area but then were forced to withdraw from it by some reason. So, the reports about the control over the oil fields appeared to be premature.

The situation remains unclear. However, no doubts the real developments on the ground are very different to the coverage provided by the mainstream media.

This map provides a general look at the military situation in the area:



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