

Video: A Day of Violent Escalation and Expectation in Syria

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October 20th was a day of escalation in Syria’s north, with casualties on most, if not all sides and October 21st dawned with an expectation of even more fighting and preparations for the ensuing chaos.

Most significantly, several explosions rocked the US-led coalition garrison in the southeastern Syrian area of al-Tanf, where some 200 American troops are deployed. Arabic media reported that five suicide drones struck the garrison.

The attack was reportedly carried out by Iranian-backed forces. The Allies of Syria Operations Room, which commands Iranian-backed forces in Syria, vowed to respond “very harshly” to the October 13 Israeli airstrikes that targeted the outskirts of the ancient Syrian city of Palmyra. That attack reportedly originated from the direction al-Tanf.

https://southfront.org/wp-content/uploads/video/21.10.2021_IMR_Syria.mp4

It all began on the previous day, when the Syrian Arab Army (SAA) boasted with its reinforcements on the northern frontlines sent there to deter a Turkish ground operation against the Kurdish groups in the region, in which many civilians would also suffer.

Then “a series of unfortunate events” ensued, beginning with an IED attack on an SAA bus in Damascus city that left 14 SAA soldiers dead.

Then, near the frontlines, a large explosion rocked an SAA ammunition depot on the outskirts of Hama city, along the Hama-Homs highway. Reports put the casualty number at 6, all possibly members of the National Defense Forces or Iranian-backed factions. The reason behind the blast was dubbed a technical failure.

Later in the day, Turkey carried out a drone strike on the northeastern Syrian town of Kobane which is held by the US-backed Kurdish Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

The drone strike came just ahead of the expected Ankara operation against Kurdish forces in the countryside of Aleppo, where Kobane is located.

Prior to that, artillery of Turkish-backed forces hit positions of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) near the town of Tel-Tamr in Syria's Hassakah governorate. Several areas were targeted, and it is very apparent that Turkey's increased activity in the past several days is preparing the situation for the upcoming operation.

Possibly taking advantage of Ankara's forces and proxies being focused on the Kurdish-controlled areas, SAA and its allies are turning their attention also towards Greater Idlib.

On October 20, 10 people were killed and at least 20 others were wounded in a series of artillery strikes that targeted the town of Arihah in the northwestern Syrian region of Greater Idlib.

The strikes were attributed to the SAA. The town of Arihah is a well-known stronghold of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), the de-facto ruler of Greater Idlib.

HTS and its allies shelled several artillery positions of the SAA in what they claimed to be a "response" the strikes that targeted Arihah. No casualties or material losses were reported.

It is a week of escalation, and all sides are expecting the others to make the first move so that chaos ensues. It is highly likely that Turkey cannot focus on both defending the so-called "moderate opposition" in Greater Idlib, while attacking the Kurdish-controlled areas, and Damascus and its allies are betting exactly on that.

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