

Video: Russian Military Police Under Attack in Northern Syria

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Three Russian military police officers received light injuries when an improvised explosive device went off near their armored vehicle in northeastern Syria, the Russian Defense Ministry reported on December 2. The incident happened when the Russian Military Police were fulfilling a reconnaissance task along the route for a joint Russian-Turkish patrol mission in about 1.5 km to the west of the village of Koran.

The IED attack became the most recent in a long series of provocations against Turkish and Russian patrols in northeastern Syria. Previously, radicals affiliated with the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces were trying to block patrols, and even throwing stones and petrol bombs at them.

These attacks were temporarily halted after on November 20 SDF security forces Asayish publicly apologized for the “unfortunate” incident with throwing of petrol bombs and promised to work to prevent such cases in the future. Nonetheless, it seems that the radical pro-US faction within the Kurdish leadership is too strong and provocations will continue.

If such actions lead to real casualties among the Russian personnel, this may force Moscow to reconsider its approach towards containing Turkish military actions against Kurdish armed groups in northeastern Syria.

https://southfront.org/wp-content/uploads/video/IMR_03_12_2019.mp4

Russian and Turkish forces conduct patrol missions under the October 22 memorandum signed in Sochi between Russia and Turkey. Units of the Russian Military Police coordinate their actions with Syrian border service and the Turkish Army. The goal of the effort is to provide assistance in ensuring security of citizens and maintaining order, as well as controlling the implementation of a memorandum on withdrawing Kurdish armed groups and their weapons some 30 km from the border.

Clashes between the Syrian Army and Hayat Tahrir al-Sham-led forces continued near Rasm al-Ward and Istablat in southeastern Idlib. These villages remain a de-facto no man's land amid intense artillery duels and air strikes. Pro-government sources claim that militants suffered large casualties. However, they as well as pro-militant sources provided little evidence to confirm these claims.

Syrian and Russian airstrikes also hit fortifications and weapon depots belonging to militants near Kafr Nabl, Maarat Al-Numan, and Kafr Sijnah.

The Syrian Army is currently deploying reinforcements near the frontline in southern Idlib. This may indicate that government forces are planning to respond to militants' recent attacks with own ground operation.

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