

Video: Turkey Strikes against Kurdish SDF Forces in Northern Syria

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The situation in the northern Syrian provinces of Aleppo and al-Hasakah is once again escalating amid speculations on the upcoming Turkish advance in the area.

In recent weeks, the Turkish military and its proxies increased the intensity of strikes on positions of the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and even on nearby positions of the Syrian Army along the contact line in the northeast of Syria. For example, on the evening of December 6, Turkish strikes hit a position of the Syrian Army near Tall Tamr destroying a BMP vehicle and reportedly injuring or killing several soldiers. Meanwhile, fighters affiliated with the SDF attacked a position of the Turkish Army near Bab al-Khayr. According to pro-Kurdish sources, 2 Turkish soldiers were allegedly killed or injured in the attack. On the same day, the Turkish military and its proxies launched over 150 artillery shells at targets near and inside the town of Ain Issa. The shelling that lasted for several hours reportedly killed at least one SDF member and injured several others.

The activity of Turkish forces near Ain Issa was permanently high in the last few months but in recent weeks the situation deteriorated even further. A nearby observation post of the Russian Military Police and a position of the Syrian Army did not stop the Turks from violating the ceasefire. In its own turn, pro-Ankara sources insist that the tensions in the region are a result of regular sabotage attacks by the SDF and affiliated Kurdish rebels near Ain Issa itself and in entire northern part of Syria in general. For example, Kurdish groups linked with the SDF regularly inflict casualties on Turkish forces and their proxies in Afrin. While publicly the SDF pretends that it is not linked with these attacks, nobody with at least one brain cell believes in this.

https://southfront.org/wp-content/uploads/video/IMR_Syria_08_12_2020.mp4

The strong SDF links with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), a Kurdish separatist armed group that seeks to create an independent Kurdish state on the territory of southeastern Turkey, and if it is possible northern Iraq and northern Syria, also does not contribute to stability. Turkey sees the group as a vital threat to its national security. Recently, the SDF Commander-in-Chief Ferhat Abdi Şahin officially confirmed that at least 4,000 PKK members died in the battles in Syria fighting on the side of the SDF. Abdi, better known by his nom de guerre Mazloun Kobani, is himself a senior member of the PKK and a personal friend of the group's leader Abdullah Öcalan, who has been imprisoned in Turkey since 1999.

So, there is no surprise that Ankara sees claims of the United States leadership and SDF officials that the Kurdish-led group is not an offshoot of the PKK, but a 'democratically-oriented multiethnic alliance' as a bad joke and the highest level of hypocrisy. In these

conditions, the fate of the SDF is predetermined and the group remains under the permanent threat of a large-scale Turkish military attack.

At the same time, the main backer of the SDF, the United States, has never hurried up to openly back the group against its own important ally in the Middle East and a member of NATO. Therefore, on the one hand, in its actions, the SDF relies on US support and has been consistently sabotaging Damascus' proposals on the political and security reintegration into Syria. On the other hand, the Kurdish-led group has already lost a large part of the territories that it had controlled as a result of Turkish attacks.

This posture led to expected results and the last time the SDF even asked the Russians and the Syrian Army to rescue it from the Turkish advance in the northeast. The deployment of the Russian and Syrian units along the contact line put an end to Turkey's Operation Peace Spring in 2019. Immediately after this, the Kurds turned their back on their rescuers and started cooperation with Washington in the field looting Syrian oil on the eastern bank of the Euphrates. Now, when the situation near Ain Issa is once again on the brink of military confrontation with Turkey, pro-SDF media have been crying and complaining about the alleged Russian demand to surrender the town to the Syrian Army to prevent the escalation. SDF sources call this 'unfair' and 'unacceptable'.

It looks like that for the current Kurdish SDF leadership on Washington's payroll it would be more acceptable to lose another chunk of territory and provoke a bloodbath than to finally normalize relations with Damascus.

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