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Video: Turkish Army Suffers Casualties in Southern Idlib

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In-depth Report: SYRIA

One Turkish soldier died and another was injured in an IED attack in Syria's southern Idlib, the Turkish Defense Ministry reported late on May 27. The incident happened while units of the Turkish Army and the Turkish-backed militant group Sham Legion were passing near Jisr al-Shughur. The killed soldier was identified as lieutenant Canbert Tatar. He become the second Turkish soldier killed in the M4 highway area since the signing of the March 5 de-escalation agreement in Moscow.

Earlier on May 27, a large explosion erupted near an HQ and a weapon depot of the Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP) in the town of al-Gassaneyah. At least 6 members of the terrorist group died. Some pro-militant sources claimed that the explosion was caused by an airstrike by the Russian Aerospace Forces. Other sources say that the incident happened due to poor safety measures at the weapon depot.

The attack on the Turkish patrol was likely conducted by the TIP or its allies. The TIP's main stronghold, Jisr al-Shughur, is located just inside the security zone that should be cleared from radicals under the de-escalation agreement. So, the al-Qaeda-linked group and its local allies are doing all they can to sabotage the deal.

https://southfront.org/wp-content/uploads/video/IMR_28_05_2020_ENG.mp4

On May 28, Idlib militant groups and pro-Turkish sources immediately blamed Russia for the casualties among the Turkish Army. According to them, the 'aggressive actions' of Moscow and the 'bloody Assad regime' are the source of the tensions. So, Turkey should continue defending al-Qaeda in southern Idlib at any cost.

The Syrian Army, the National Defense Forces, and Liwa al-Quds continue their operation against ISIS along the Palmyra-Deir Ezzor highway and in southern Raqqa. So far, they have neutralized over 20 militants, seized over a dozen vehicles and destroyed several ISIS hideouts. On May 27 and May 28, Russian airstrikes on ISIS positions were also reported.

Syrian government forces are using the Idlib ceasefire to deal with the ISIS threat in the desert. However, if the situation in Idlib escalates, the army and its allies will be forced to redeploy at least a part of their forces involved in the anti-ISIS operation to the frontline. This will give additional opportunities to any ISIS cells still hiding in the desert.

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