

Video: Turkish Forces Are on ‘Tactical Retreat’. Syrian Army Recaptures More Territory in Eastern and Southern Idlib

By [South Front](#)

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Erdogan's forces continue their bloody battle for peace and prosperity for al-Qaeda groups in the Syrian region of Greater Idlib.

On March 3, Turkey shot down an L-39 warplane of the Syrian Air Force in eastern Idlib. The warplane, which was carrying out strikes on al-Qaeda militants, crashed near the town of Maarat al-Numan. One of the ejected pilots landed in the militant-held area and was killed. On the same day, Turkish media released videos showing drone strikes on the Syrian Army convoy supposedly moving near Maarat al-Numan and the destruction of an alleged Pantsir air defense system of the Syrian Air Defense Forces near Saraqib.

Additionally, a large Turkish military column consisting of M113 and ACV-15 armoured vehicles, Leopard 2A4 battle tanks and ALTIGNAN air defense systems entered Batbu village in the northern part of Idlib. Pro-Turkish sources also claimed that the Turkish military will soon deploy Hisar air defense systems to the region in order to put an end to the constant aggression of the Syrian and Russian air power against peaceful al-Qaeda members and their Turkish supporters. Thus far, al-Qaeda members and the Turkish Army are on a ‘tactical retreat’.

https://southfront.org/wp-content/uploads/video/IMR_04_03_2020.mp4

In eastern Idlib, Erdogan's forces lost the villages of Jawbas, Tarnaba, Dadikh and Kafr Battikh west of Saraqib. Units of the Syrian Army also advanced on the town of Afirs aiming to fully secure the M4-M5 crossroad area. In southern Idlib, the Syrians cleared the villages Kafr Mus, Kawkabah, Amqiyah and Fulayfil of Turkish-led forces. On top of this, the Syrian military shot down 3 Turkish combat UAVs. One of them, the Bayraktar TB2 crashed near Saraqib. According to pro-government sources over 150 militants were killed or injured in recent clashes with the Syrian Army. Taking into account the scale of the ground clashes, this number is likely overestimated.

However, such claims are a weak shadow of the statements of the Turkish Defense Ministry which is ‘neutralizing’ thousands of Syrian soldiers and hundreds of pieces of military equipment in its statements on a regular basis.

On the morning of March 3, the Turkish military claimed that that during the past 24 hours Turkish-led forces had destroyed a warplane, a UAV, 6 battle tanks, 5 howitzers and artillery pieces, 2 air defense systems, 3 armored combat vehicles, 5 armed pickups, 6 military

vehicles and an ammunition depot belonging to Syrian forces. The defense ministry also claimed that 327 Syrian soldiers were “neutralized” during the same period.

On the evening of the same day, when Erdogan’s forces withdrew from another batch of positions, a Turkish soldier was killed and 9 others were injured, so the defense ministry made another Twitter offensive to compensate the setbacks. It said that 299 Syrian soldiers were ‘neutralized’, and 9 battle tanks, 8 artillery pieces and rocket systems and 2 military vehicles were recently destroyed. Thus, the Turkish-claimed number of “neutralized” Syrian soldiers since the start of Operation Piece Spring just reached 3,183. It doesn’t matter if the Turkish military announces that its forces have destroyed a Syrian carrier strike group ‘Al-Assad’ near Tartus or shot down a dozen Russian-supplied Su-50 fighter jets or even neutralized a detachment of Iranian Rembos, the result will be same –the invincible Turkish forces make no gains on the ground.

Meanwhile, Moscow once again announced that Russia is not planning to cease anti-terrorist efforts in the Idlib region and called Turkish claims about ‘millions’ of refugees fleeing the Syrian anti-terrorist operation in Idlib fake.

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