

## Video: Turkey's War on Syria. Bluff or Reality?

By [South Front](#)

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*Turkey will take the Idlib matter into its own hands and the military operation in northwestern Syria is simply a "matter of time", President Recep Tayyip Erdogan declared on February 19. Erdogan said that Turkey is not satisfied with talks on the matter with Russia, and it will not leave the region to "the Assad regime and its backers."*

*He recalled that only a few days left until the end of February, the deadline given by Ankara to Syrian forces to stop operations against Idlib armed groups. If the Syrians do not withdraw, Turkey promised to attack and push the Syrian Army back from the areas cleared from militants. Erdogan's "last warning" came as Turkish media outlets were broadcasting news showing how columns of Turkish troops and vehicle were moving towards the border with Syria. However, did Turkey really deployed enough forces to deliver a devastating blow to the Syrian military and do not pay a heavy price?*

In the framework of the Astana agreements, Turkey established 12 observation posts. As the Syrian Army was advancing into Idlib, Ankara created a plethora of additional military positions in a failed attempt to stop the collapse of militants' defense. These efforts binged the total number of Turkish military installations in the region up to 27.

Judging from various footage, there are between one dozen and two dozen soldiers, as well as 4-6 military vehicles at every post located within the areas currently controlled by the Syrian government. The recently created posts are much stronger and can be described as real military positions with battle tanks, howitzers, mortars and fortified structures.

[https://southfront.org/wp-content/uploads/video/IMR\\_Turkey\\_Forces.mp4](https://southfront.org/wp-content/uploads/video/IMR_Turkey_Forces.mp4)

The estimated total number of military equipment deployed by the Turkish Armed Forces in Idlib stands at 3,000. Since February 2nd, Turkey deployed 2,315 trucks and military vehicles, as well as 7,000 soldiers. Meanwhile, Turkey has positioned approximately 30,000 troops along the Syrian border in case of an escalation.

The equipment and weapons that are being delivered include armored trucks, MRAPs, armored personnel carriers, battle tanks, ATGMs, various artillery pieces and rocket launchers. Army troops are reinforced with a notable number of special forces.

According to pro-opposition sources, there are over 100,000 members of various groups, predominantly Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham in Idlib. These groups are already actively taking part in the fight against the Syrian Arab Army. However, the real mobilization potential demonstrated by these factions during the recent battles does not exceed 10,000-20,000.

In comparison, during Operation Euphrates Shield, in which Turkey struggled greatly, it

deployed approximately 8,000 soldiers, in addition to approximately 11,000 Syrian “opposition” fighters, against 7,000 ISIS militants. This operation became widely known for large casualties among Turkish soldiers and proxies, as well as a large number of military equipment, including Leopard 2A4 battle tanks, lost during the battle of al-Bab.

Another example is operation Olive Branch that involve around 6,000 Turkish troops, and 20,000 Turkish-backed fighters, against approximately 20,000 Syrian Democratic Forces and allied fighters. However, Kurdish armed groups did not engage Turkish-led forces in an intense open or urban fighting and opted to retreat from the region after weeks of artillery and air bombardment. Since then, Ankara has been trying to consolidate control over the area and put an end to constant attacks on its forces from the remaining YPG cells.

Finally, Operation Peace Spring, which began in late 2019, reportedly involved 15,000 Turkish troops and 14,000 members of proxy groups. It also went without a significant open resistance from Kurdish groups and was frozen with the Syrian Army and the Russian Military Police deployed in the area.

It also would be useful to note that both ISIS and Kurdish formations targeted by Turkey were outnumbered in the area of operations, suffered from a lack of modern weapons, heavy military equipment and artillery, and had no means and measures to combat the Turkish Air Force. No intense fighting took place in large urban areas. Despite this, the aforementioned operations became a real challenge for Turkey and its proxy groups.

Therefore, it is unlikely that the Turkish forces currently deployed in Idlib and northwestern Syria will be enough to turn into reality Erdogan’s threats and promises. So, Turkey should hurry up and increase its military group in the area by several times, or Erdogan supporters should start preparing for March 1, the day when the dreams about the swift and powerful Turkish victory over ‘Assad forces’ will be broken by the reality.

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