

## **Report on Situation in North East Syria, last 24 hours, 12th October 2019, 8am Rojava Information Center**

*On Wednesday the 9th of October 2019 Turkey started attacking the region governed by the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria.*

*The Turkish attacks started at 4:00 PM (EEST/GMT+3) with air strikes in the region of Serekaniye (Ras al Ain) and Tel Abyad (Kurdish: Gire Spi).*

### *Overview*

The third day of the Turkish invasion of North East Syria has seen critical levels of displacement, deaths and injuries. Our team in Til Temir and Sere Kaniye has witnessed heavy fighting and bombing in and around Sere Kaniye. Ground clashes continue in the villages surrounding Sere Kaniye and Tel Abyad. Turkey has begun to shell the city of Kobane. According to our sources on the ground, both the cities of Sere Kaniye and Tel Abyad continue to be held by the SDF, while surrounding villages trade hands back and forth. A potentially significant new development is reported military activity in Deir-ez-Zor, as well as Turkish shelling of an American military point in Kobane. In Qamishlo, we witnessed the aftermath of Turkish shelling of a bread factory as well as many civilian homes. Shelling has targetted one prison in Kobane and two in Qamishlo, all of which are holding ISIS detainees. 5 ISIS prisoners escaped from one of the Qamishlo prisons. Our local contacts from associations of the many ethnicities and religions present in North East Syria - Christian, Muslim, Arab, Armenian, Assyrian and others - are speaking out against the invasion, particularly following Turkish shelling of villages populated by Syriac Christians and Yezidis surrounding Tirbespiye. Increasing numbers of institutions and organisations worldwide have come out strongly against the attack, with America threatening crippling sanctions, particularly if ethnic minorities are sanctioned or if ISIS prisoners escape.

### *Sere Kaniye and Tel Abyad*

The most intense fighting between Turkish proxy forces and the SDF on the ground in North East Syria remained in the region of Sere Kaniye and Tel Abyad. In Sere Kaniye the villages and territory around the city were trading hands between Turkish proxies and the SDF throughout the day. Turkish proxy forces were present on Syrian territory as the Turkish army launched shells and airstrikes on contested regions. Our team on the ground reports that Turkey is targetting civilians fleeing the city and medical transportation trying to get in and out of the city after the hospital was taken out of service due to the intensive shellings and air strikes on the city. Speaking to people inside Sere Kaniye, Turkish proxy forces were not able to get hold of any part of the city, and most of the surrounded villages have been taken back into SDF control. Early in the morning the villages of Salahiye and Esidiye on the road between Sere Kaniye and Til Temir were bombed by planes. The Arab city of Tel Abyad was the target of heavy attacks from Turkey, and was evacuated from civilians by the SDF. Tel Abyad is held by the SDF and according to ground sources Turkish proxy forces were not able to gain notable ground. However, three days of artillery and air strikes have lead to the forced displacement of virtually the entire civil population in this region.

### *Kobane*

Turkey began to shell the city of Kobane for the first time on the 11th. Like in all the other cities and villages the heavy shelling lead to people fleeing the area, but especially in Kobane a big part of the population refused to leave, protesting in front of the headquarters of the International Coalition forces. Kobane was taken by ISIS in 2014, forcing the entire population to leave the city, so the population is facing repeated displacement and destruction of their homes after only five years. In the night the Turkish shelling targetted two ISIS prisons close to a high profile Coalition military base, which was hit by the Turkish artillery. Sources in Kobane report that after the attack there were two Coalition helicopters and one plane taking off from the base. Brett McGurk confirmed

that Turkey has fired on a declared U.S. military outpost in northern Syria, despite knowing the precise grid coordinates.

#### *Other cities*

Qamishlo again faced heavy shelling throughout the day, and we spoke to people living in Qidurbek and Zeytunyah, two neighborhoods experiencing some of the heaviest shelling. We spoke to the family of a 12 year old boy who was killed by the shells, and a family who are the only ones left in their neighborhood as everyone else has fled. Turkish shells targeted two prisons containing ISIS prisoners - Navkur and Jirkin - and a bread factory. Bread shortages are being experienced across the city. At 5:00 PM a popular restaurant in Qamishlo was targeted by an attack which was claimed by ISIS. At 3:00 AM citizens of Qamishlo were caught by surprise and frightened by the sound of airplanes overhead, until it was confirmed that it was Coalition aircraft. We spoke to witnesses of the attack, who reported that the attack consisted of one car with Syrian Government license plates detonating on a timer, with a second car driven by a suicide attacker also detonating.

There are several reports of conflicts in Deir-ez-Zor, but the situation remains unclear. The SDF claims that they were attacked by Iranian forces in Deir-ez-Zor, but we were only able to confirm that there is military activity of some kind.

There has been ongoing shelling of Navkur and Jirkin prisons in Qamishlo, the shelling of two prisons near Mashtenur in Kobane, and a car bomb detonated outside of Ghuwairan prison in Hasakah - all five facilities hold ISIS prisoners. As the SDF moved 5 high security ISIS prisoners from Navkur prison to a more secure facility, the area was shelled again and the prisoners were able to escape into Qamishlo city.

#### *ISIS*

ISIS-linked women in Al Hol camp have staged another uprising (previous one on 9th October), attacking security forces, setting fires, and attempting to break out. SDF and Asayish internal security forces are expressing concern that they are unable to maintain counter terror operations and that the risk of ISIS taking advantage of this reduced capacity is severe. Several raids on suspected ISIS activity have uncovered and prevented attacks. A car bomb explosion in Qamishlo was claimed by ISIS, and 5 ISIS prisoners escaped while being moved from a prison facility targeted by shelling.

#### *Humanitarian crisis*

The international humanitarian community has condemned the Turkish invasion of Northern Syria, although the United Nations Security Council has failed to take decisive action to halt the invasion. The United Nations Human Needs Assessment Programme calculates the number of displaced people from just the first two days of the conflict as 191,069 - the number now probably exceeds 200,000. On the 11 October virtually all civilians were evacuated from Tel Abyad. Most displaced people have fled to Ain Issa, Raqqa, Til Tamir or Hasakah. We spoke to dozens of refugees from Tel Abyad, Kobane and Sere Kaniye who had fled to the city of Til Tamir, hearing testimonies of the critical situation at the emergency hospital in Til Tamir. The Semalka border crossing continues to be crowded, with only a small number of people making it through. The Mabruka refugee camp, which housed 3,776 internally displaced people (63% of whom are children) was evacuated and relocated to Areesha camp south of Hasakah city. Our ground team report that ambulance movement in and out of Sere Kaniye is being targeted because the roads from the city are being targeted by Turkish snipers and shelling. This morning at 7:00 AM a Kurdish Red Crescent medical point near Sere Kaniye was targeted by shelling, one ambulance was partially destroyed and the driver wounded. Access to water in some areas of Hasakah region is critical due to the Turkish shelling of water facilities, with water shortages reported at hospitals in the region.

#### *Casualty count*

The Kurdish Red Crescent reported that on the 9th of October there were 3 civilian deaths, and on the 10th of October there were 8 civilian deaths, and 3 on the 11th within the services they provide. We don't have any other reliable numbers and we will investigate further.