

Report on Situation in North East Syria, last 24 hours, 13th 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 (Gire Spi).

Overview

- On the 12th October, the fighting was most concentrated on Sere Kaniye and Tel Abyad. Claims by Turkish forces that they have taken Sere Kaniye have been contradicted by sources on the ground
- The Secretary General of the Syria Future Party has been executed by Turkish proxy forces, along with eight other people
- The city of Tel Temir is full of displaced people, as well as volunteers from across North and East Syria who have rushed to help with humanitarian response
- A convoy of civilians from Kobane, Minbij and other areas have joined residents of Tel Abyad in a sit in protest in Tel Abyad. They were targeted by Turkish shelling
- Electricity infrastructure has been targeted by Turkish shelling, causing widespread power outages within Qamishlo city and west of the city
- Water shortages reach critical levels around Hasakah region
- As governments and humanitarian organisations from around the world condemn the invasion, local residents say "it's not enough to just say that the invasion is wrong, we need action"

Report from our team on the ground in Tel Temir:

In Sere Kaniye there is heavy war, with many wounded and dead: both civilian and military. Although most civilians have fled, many of those who were part of the Civil Defence Forces – voluntary civilian forces of self defence and internal security – have stayed in Sere Kaniye and joined the SDF in defending the city.

The immediate response to the humanitarian impacts of the Turkish invasion is based in the city of Tel Temir. Alongside the response to the invasion, in Tel Temir life continues - shops and cafeterias are open, there are people in the streets. But people are constantly checking their phones for news, often struggling to differentiate between fake news circulated on social media and facts.

Our on the ground team in Tel Temir observed the humanitarian response to the invasion, and noted that significant numbers of volunteers from across North and East Syria - including many doctors - have rushed to Tel Temir to help. Some NGOs present on the ground in Tel Temir are international NGOs Cadus and MSF, as well as local NGOs Hevi and Kurdish Red Crescent. Other NGOs are also present, but it is noticeable that a significant proportion of the humanitarian response is being organised by local residents, the local administration, and the displaced people themselves. Within Tel Temir, 5 schools are housing larger numbers refugees, and others are being hosted by local families. Many volunteers for the humanitarian response are also housed by local families.

The hospital of Tel Temir is crowded with families waiting for news of injured, missing and dead. Our team on the ground have said: "there are so many people trying to get into the hospital that local security forces have had to regulate the entrance of the hospital." They met many people whose relatives are missing, with no news of what had happened to them.

Yesterday was the second day without water supply in Tel Temir. They are currently relying on backup water storage tanks in homes, but this water will soon run out. Sere Kaniye is also without water.

Sere Kaniye

From the early morning and lasting the whole day there were constant battles in and around Sere Kaniye. Turkey attacked with both ground and air bombardment in Sere Kaniye and the surrounding villages. There were also air strikes on the city center. The Turkish proxy forces

encircled Sere Kaniye from three sides, trying to enter the city. The fight is still ongoing around the villages and the industrial area of Sere Kaniye. According to our team on the ground the Martyrs' Cemetery and the industrial area (Sinayi) in the east of the city are the most hotly contested areas and are changing hands throughout the day. Turkey claimed to have conquered the city several times throughout the day, but speaking to local sources in Sere Kaniye we can confirm that the city is still primarily held by the SDF, with some contested areas. The surrounding villages are also trading hands throughout the day. The SDF also recaptured the M4 road south of Sere Kaniye, which runs from Hasakeh to Aleppo, which Turkish proxy forces had held for some hours. During this time Turkish proxy forces pulled nine people out of their cars, among them the Secretary General of the Future Syria Party, Hevrin Khalaf and executed them.

Tel Abyad

Tel Abyad was again targeted yesterday. We spoke to people in the city, who told us that from the early morning on there have been attacks going on, with Turkey using heavy weapons and aircraft. There have been around 150 civilians protesting at the Ali roundabout in the center of the city, who were targeted with shelling in the early afternoon. The protesters were part of a convoy of civilians from cities like Kobane and Manbij who had come to Tel Abyad to support. Witnesses we spoke to estimate 10 deaths and more wounded. There were battles in the villages east and west of the city.

Other regions

Derik: Turkey was shelling the villages Ain Diwar and Ziheriye in the Derik region. One civilian died in the attacks, another was wounded. We spoke to people there who said that there is constant coming and going of airplanes and helicopters of Coalition forces.

Deir-ez-Zor: There are clashes, attacks and continuous bombings in areas controlled by the SDF in the countryside of Deir-ez-Zor. Sources indicate that the attacks might be coming from Iranian proxy forces.

Hasakah: Two car explosions were recorded, one in the neighborhood of Ghweiran close to an ISIS prison, another one close to a gas station.

ISIS

Next to the ongoing attempts to free ISIS prisoners by targeting prisons, there was also an attack on a checkpoint in Bahoz which was claimed by ISIS. This is the first attack in Bahoz since SDF defeated ISIS there. The security situation gets increasingly out of control. Because the invasion is presenting immediate threats on several fronts, the head commander of the senior SDF official Redur Xelil said in a statement that dealing with ISIS sleeper cells or guarding ISIS detainees is no longer the priority of the SDF.

Humanitarian Crisis

The situation in North and East Syria is reaching a new level of crisis as Turkish attacks continue to target infrastructure necessary to support the civilian population. The Kurdish Red Crescent – the primary local NGO running emergency health services in response to the invasion – has said that Turkey is deliberately targeting their staff and stopping them from reaching the wounded. Civilians continue to flee Kobane as attacks continue and troops amass across the border. The displacement figure calculated by the UN two days after the start of the invasion - 191,000 - will have exceeded 200,000 by now. Turkish shelling has targetted electricity lines connecting Mabruka power station with Tishreen dam, which has cut out electricity to many cities west of Qamishlo. Power facilities serving Qamishlo city were also targetted, and now there is virtually no general electricity throughout the city. In addition to ongoing shelling of civilian neighbourhoods, a school in Salihiye, a village west of Sere Kaniye, was targetted by Turkish shelling.

The most recent count of confirmed civilian deaths is 45, with many missing.