

## **Report on the situation in North and East Syria, 14th October 2019**

### **Rojava Information Center**

#### *Overview*

The SDF and Autonomous Administration have entered in a military agreement with the Syrian government and Russia in the context of ongoing withdrawal of US forces. In an interview with officials of the Autonomous Administration, we have learned that the Syrian army will be deployed along the border from Derik to Serekaniye (Ras al Ain), and Tal Abyad until Manbij. The Syrian army will not enter Sere Kaniye or Tel Abyad. The institutions of the Autonomous Administration will remain. The agreement also includes the intention to eventually push Turkish backed forces out of Afrin region, which has been under Turkish backed occupation since early 2018. Reports that a No Fly zone will be enforced by Russia are false. However, Russian aircraft have entered the conflict for the first time, above Minbij. The casualty count continues to rise from the Turkish shelling of a civilian peace convoy on the 13th. The convoy, which carried civil society representatives, community leaders and journalists from across North and East Syria, had driven to Sere Kaniye to protest and document the invasion. There are 12 dead, including several local journalists, and at least 73 injured.

#### *Sere Kaniye*

There is heavy fighting in the outskirts of Sere Kaniye. Our team on the ground says: "This morning there were no bombings in Sere Kaniye. At 4:00 AM this morning four groups of Turkish proxy forces attacked coming from the border. Turkish proxy forces are blocking the road in the east and are inside the quarter Sinayi (industrial area). There are clashes in the north part of the city. The street in the direction of Tel Abyad (West) is also closed. The three main roads linking Sere Kaniye to other cities in North and East Syria are targeted by Turkish air strikes. The most heavy clashes are happening at the entrance of the city on the Qamishlo road. The attacks of the four groups of Turkish proxy forces have been repelled." In the morning Sere Kaniye was almost entirely again held by the SDF. There are heavy clashes in the village Tel Helef to the west of Sere Kaniye. In an attempt to cut off the last road in and out Sere Kaniye, Turkish proxy forces attacked the village Manajir (20 km from Tel Tamer) between Sere Kaniye and Tel Tamer. Around 300 civilians, mostly women and children and elders, were forced to flee the village. There were heavy clashes between the SDF and Turkish proxy forces. This position also endangers the last medical point in the region that the Kurdish Red Crescent has in Tel Tamer. Our team on the ground: "Today at 3:00 PM a Turkish air strike hit close to Tel Tamer in the village Manajir. But the SDF was able to defeat the Turkish proxy forces in that village. Now there is a clash in the village Aras, 20/25 km away from Tel Tamer".

#### *Other regions*

*Dirbesiye:* There were heavy clashes in Dirbesiye when Turkish proxy forces started attacking the town under the cover of shelling from Turkey. They also targeted the village Shatal west of Dirbesiye on the road to Sere Kaniye. Turkey is targetting villages along the road and snipers of the Turkish proxy forces are firing at civilians.

*Tel Abyad:* In the morning Tel Abyad was in the hands of Turkish proxy forces. In the afternoon SDF proceeded on several wings at the same time and recovered some territory around Tel Abyad. According to the latest information the city and villages in the west and east of Tel Abyad are in the hands of Turkish proxy forces.

*Manbij:* Forces of the Syrian Army entered Manbij after the agreement between the SDF and the Syrian government. In the afternoon Turkish proxy forces started an offensive on the villages north-west of Manbij across the Sajur river. The Manbij Military Council together with Syrian Army forces successfully countered the attacks. We spoke to a person who said "there were clashes in the

villages Arab-Hassan and Shad, there were also air planes seen over Manbij". According to another local source Russian warplanes overflew the city. There are reports that Russian air craft also targeted Turkish proxy forces trying to infiltrate the village Al-Farat. There was a massive mobilization of the Turkish proxy forces in the Jarablus countryside, which may indicate preparation for attacks on Manbij and Kobane.

Following the agreement between SDF and the Syrian government, Syrian Army Forces entered Raqqa, Tabqa, Hasakeh, Ain Issa, Tel Tamer, Manbij and Kobane, establishing military positions there.

### *ISIS*

There were clashes between security forces and ISIS elements within Ain Issa camp, which is in the process of evacuation. ISIS communications aimed at ISIS-linked women detained in camps urged them to prepare to break out. A mass breakout of ISIS-linked families from Ain Issa camp due to Turkish shelling on the 13th has been confirmed. The presence of ISIS sleeper cells also presents a critical threat to civilian populations. SDF arrested an ISIS cell west of Dirbesiye.

### *Humanitarian crisis*

As of the 14th October, all international NGOs have now evacuated their international staff. All services in the refugee camps - including those housing ISIS-linked families - are now being provided by the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria, local NGOs (primarily Kurdish Red Crescent) and a reduced United Nations presence. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has left Qamishlo. Many international media have also left due to the advance of the Syrian Army towards the Syria - Turkey border following the military agreement. Ain Issa refugee camp is evacuating due to shelling and attacks from Turkish proxy forces and ISIS attacks. In the early afternoon, there were reports of grain being looted from the silos at Suluk east of Kobane by a Turkish proxy forces. Our on the ground team reports that the Tel Tamer Legerin Hospital, which has been the primary site of treating the wounded and displaced from Sere Kaniye, has been evacuated to Hasakah due to the advance of Turkish proxy forces.

The latest numbers of casualties and wounded are from the Tel Tamer hospital. According to the director there were 75 civilian deaths and 450 injured civilians, including the figures from the Sere Kaniye convoy attack. According to the Syrian Observatory for Human rights there are a quarter of a million displaced people in North East Syria.