

Report on Situation in North East Syria, last 24 hours
15th October 2019, 8am - 16th October 8am
Rojava Information Center

Overview

Sere Kaniye is mostly controlled by the SDF, and Tel Abyad by Turkish backed forces. Pockets of fighting remain in both cities and surrounding villages continue to trade hands. Turkish backed forces attempted an invasion of Kobane from Jarablus in the west, which was repelled by the SDF. The Syrian Army and Coalition forces jostled for position around Kobane. The situation in Tel Tamer is critical, with shelling and ground clashes in villages surrounding the city causing the hospital to temporarily close, and residents and IDPs to flee onwards to Hasakah. We have also received further information that the agreement between the Autonomous Administration – Damascus agreement is not a written agreement, but currently is an agreement to cooperate militarily.

Our team on the ground

Our team on the ground is moving between Hasakah, Tel Tamer and the surroundings of Sere Kaniye. They have confirmed drone surveillance over Tel Tamer, and artillery attacks and clashes in nearby villages, which has caused many IDPs and residents to flee. Although many have left, the city remains crowded with IDPs, leading to bread shortages. In the absence of NGOs, local response networks are coordinating the distribution of bread from bakeries in nearby villages. Although there isn't Syrian Army presence within Tel Tamer, the Syrian Army has set up a checkpoint one kilometer outside of the city.

Humanitarian Crisis

There are reports of Turkish proxy forces looting and assaulting civilians in border villages. Reports also indicate that groups within the Turkish proxy forces include Ahrar Al-Sharqiya, Mohammad Al-Fateh, Hamza Division affiliates, Syrian Front, and Sultan Murad Division. The front line is advancing towards the city of Tel Tamer, which has been the primary point for humanitarian support of the displaced and wounded fleeing from Sere Kaniye and Tel Helef. Many residents and displaced people are fleeing onwards to Hasakah. The Tel Tamer hospital had to close for several hours due to increased threat of artillery and air strikes. Many patients are being sent on to Hasakah. Kurdish Red Crescent continues to report deliberate targeting of their ambulances with artillery attacks. UNICEF has calculated at least 70,000 children as being among the displaced. As virtually all international NGOs have pulled out of the region - with some stripped-back UN and ICRC presence in some of the refugee camps - the situation both inside and outside of the camps is deteriorating. Our team on the ground reports that ICRC, Doctors Without Borders and Mercy Corps have all left Tel Tamer.

ISIS Resurgence

There have been ongoing uprisings in Ain Issa camp, with fires being set by ISIS-linked residents spreading out of control. There are several reports of Internal Security Forces losing control of the situation in the camp and ISIS-linked families escaping, many heading towards Turkish-controlled areas, but we have not been able to verify. There were breakouts of ISIS-linked families from Al Hol camp, though they were later recaptured. An ISIS sleeper cell was arrested in Qamishlo.

Sere Kaniye and Tel Helef

Since morning there were heavy clashes between Turkish proxy forces and the SDF in Sere Kaniye, accompanied by artillery bombardment from Turkey. According to our team on the ground the information that Tel Helef - a strategic village west of Sere Kaniye - has been regained by the SDF is not true, it is still held by Turkish proxy forces. The ongoing air strikes on the city during the day have led to severe destruction of the city. The northern outskirts on the city on the Syria - Turkey

border are held by Turkish proxy forces. In the night Turkish proxy forces attacked from north, west and east, supported by Turkish air strikes. Turkish forces are still fighting to consolidate control of the area to the south of the city so they can attack from all sides. The positions held by the either side didn't change. SDF is still in control of most of the city.

Tel Tamer

In the late evening Turkish proxy forces attacked villages north of Tel Tamer. Our team on the ground informed us about the situation in Tel Tamer: "Villages to the north of Tel Tamer towards Sere Kaniye and to the west towards Ayn Issa along the M4 road remain in Turkish control. Some villages have been won back." The SDF and SAA have launched a counterattack on areas around the M4 west of Tel Tamir, the villages Arbain and Al-Amiriyah are confirmed to be retaken by the SDF. According to our team on the ground the villages Manajir, Lylan and Til Etash are in the hands of Turkish proxy forces. They also reported Russian aircraft flying over the region, and shelling of the city by Turkish proxies. The situation in the city is critical. Since the hospital in Sere Kaniye is unable to operate, Tel Tamer hospital is the last hospital in the region that has able to receive the influx of wounded from Sere Kaniye and surrounding villages. Our team on the ground reports: "IDPs have been fleeing Tel Tamer today, where there have been drones overhead and clashes in nearby villages. All international NGOs have left the city, including ICRC Doctors without Borders and Mercy Corps. The city oven couldn't feed the refugee influx, so village ovens are being used to distribute bread to the schools, where refugees are taking shelter." We spoke to the Kurdish Red Crescent, who informed us that in the night the hospital in Tel Tamer has been out of service for several hours until midnight due to the high risk to the hospital.

Other cities

Tel Abyad

It is difficult to get information about the situation in Tel Abyad. We spoke to a source who told us that the city is mostly in the hands of Turkish proxy forces, but that there are still some pockets of resistance of the SDF within the city. There were ongoing battles in the night between Turkish proxy forces and SDF, with Turkish aircraft striking the city.

Kobane

In the early morning the villages Sikeft, Siftik, Xurxire and Bubane west of Kobane city were shelled by Turkey. The SDF repelled an attempt by Turkish proxy forces to invade from Jarablus. In the evening Turkey shelled the villages Zor Maghar and Sheiyuk Tahtani on the Euphrates river west of Kobane. A local source has told us that American aircraft departed from Khirab Ishk military base in the southeast of Kobane region in Jalabiya district in the early hours of the morning of the 15th. Later in the day, when the Syrian Army tried to enter Kobane, American forces refused to allow them to cross. Since then, there have been more coalition withdrawals from its military base in Jalabiya district. It's unclear if the Syrian Army made another attempt to enter Kobane district in the evening. According to the latest information from our sources, the Syrian army had not yet entered Kobane as of early morning 16 October.

Manbij

In the morning there were reports of two civilians killed and 13 injured in the attacks on villages in the north-west of Manbij. Over the day the coalition forces continued to withdraw from their positions in Manbij. Russia started to deploy troops in Manbij as Coalition forces withdrew. According to a local source in Manbij the Syrian Army also took positions around the city in the villages Al-Farat, Ar-Rabhasan, Omglood, Al-Sagor.

Our latest numbers on casualties are from the hospital in Tel Tamer. According to them there were 300 wounded and 78 dead civilians. According to UNICEF 70.000 children have been displaced, at least 4 were killed and 9 have been wounded.