



REPORT ON SITUATION IN NORTH EAST SYRIA 21th October 2019

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

People across North and East Syria are bracing themselves for an escalation of attacks from Turkey and proxy forces upon the expiration of the ceasefire on the 22nd. New waves of displacement are occurring in the regions around the so called safe zone, where fighting has continued. The SDF made a statement saying that since the announcement of the ceasefire, Turkey has violated its terms 37 times, listing 13 ground attacks, 10 airstrikes and 14 artillery attacks. This figure is in line with information from our sources on the ground. Talks are ongoing among America, Russia, Turkey, the Syrian Government and the Autonomous Administration. There are indications that additional Russian forces will patrol the border from Dirbesiye to Qamishlo and eastwards to Derik, as well as in the city of Hasakah.

Humanitarian situation

Another wave of displacement takes place as families flee from Dirbesiye in advance of the end of the ceasefire. Reports are that Dirbesiye - where parts of the border wall have been removed by Turkey - is becoming a ghost town as residents flee in anticipation of imminent attacks. Villagers living within the Turkish-occupied zone allege war crimes, saying that Turkish backed forces are robbing, assaulting and humiliating residents. A 17 year old boy has been reported as kidnapped. Our team in Tel Tamer reports that as winter rains approach, concerns mount over the humanitarian situation in Hasakah, where some displaced people are sleeping in gardens or without blankets.

Sere Kaniye

After the withdrawal of the SDF from Sere Kaniye, Turkish proxy forces launched attacks on villages surrounding the city. They advanced to the region Abu Rasin, southeast of the city, with tanks and artillery. The SDF and the Syrian Army repulsed several attacks on the village Manajir between Sere Kaniye and Tel Tamer. The Turkish proxy forces also attacked the village Umm Ashba between Dirbesiye and Sere Kaniye. Turkey established a military observation post in the southern village of Salhah in the countryside west of Sere Kaniye. The Syrian Observatory quotes sources describing the situation inside the city after SDF withdrawal: "The looting and rampaging of houses is 100% certain, and there are farmers and residents who confirm that after they were looted, everything was stolen whether in shops, houses or motorcycles, and all these items are sold in a market for stolen goods established by those Turkish fractions in Tel Halaf. There is another market they created in a village after Tal Halaf, called the village of Aziziyah, where there is something like a market to sell items. Stolen food or any stolen items that have a high price."

Other Regions

Tel Abyad: There are intensive military movements in the region. Turkish troops are moving, accompanied by reconnaissance flights. Two Turkish helicopters dropped off troops in the village of Zenubiye at about 4:00 AM in the morning of the 21st. Turkish proxy forces attacked the villages Khirbet al-Bakr and Kor Hassan west of the city of Tel Abyad. There are reports of Turkish proxy forces killing civilians in the village Dadat, east of Tel Abyad and seizing the property of the displaced people in the villages in the region.

Dirbesiye: We spoke to a person in Dirbesiye: "Because the ceasefire is ending tomorrow the population is leaving Dirbesiye, the city is now empty of population, they all left to Hasakah or Iraqi Kurdistan. Some of them left before and came back now to take their stuff and leave again. In the moment the situation is calm, but the population is afraid of what will happen tomorrow when the ceasefire ends."

Ayn Issa: There have been clashes between Turkish proxy forces and the SDF in villages north of the city of Ayn Issa. Turkish planes targeted al-Khalidiya area in the countryside surrounding Ayn Issa, north of Raqqa. A large number of Syrian Army soldiers have been deployed along the international highway M4 close to the city..