



REPORT ON SITUATION IN NORTH EAST SYRIA 27th October 2019

Overview

Our on the ground team attended the SDF press conference in Hasakah where the SDF confirmed that they had been working closely with US forces in the operation that killed Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, who was killed only 6km away from the Turkish border in Idlib, within Turkish controlled territory. SDF and US forces jointly conducted the operation that killed Abu al-Hassan al-Muhajir, Baghdadi's "right hand man," near Jarablus on the Turkish border in Turkish controlled territory. The SDF also confirmed that they will be withdrawing their forces as per the 22 October Sochi Agreement. Our team on the ground can confirm that SDF forces have been seen withdrawing away from the border in the direction of Hasakah. Meanwhile, Turkish attacks on villages south-east of Sere Kaniye, east of Sere Kaniye and south-west of Tal Abyad continue.

SDF withdrawal and deployment of Syrian Army forces

Following the Sochi agreement between Turkey and Russia, SDF published a statement that they are withdrawing their forces from the Syrian Turkish border to a depth of 32 km. The Syrian Army takes positions along the border from the Euphrates in the west to the Tigris in the east. According to the statement, the SDF hold Russia accountable as the guarantor against further Turkish aggression. The Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria released a statement that the Autonomous Administration will maintain its civil structures within the zone of SDF withdrawal. The SDF withdrew its forces from the towns Amude and Dirbesiye, at which point the Syrian Army took positions in Dirbesiye. When the Syrian Army took position in the contested area of Abu Rassin east of Sere Kaniye, they were directly involved in heavy clashes with Turkish proxy forces in the villages Harmala, Bab al Khair and Um Eshba. Turkish proxy forces took the village Tel Dhiyab in the Sere Kaniye countryside from the Syrian Army. The Syrian Army also entered the south-western countryside of Tel Abyad to prevent the advance of Turkish proxy forces in that area, as Turkish proxy forces attacked the village Hamila. Coinciding with the Sochi agreement and the withdrawal of SDF, Russian reinforcements reached their two bases west of Kobane and a Russian military convoy was heading towards Tel Tamer on the M4 road from Ayn Issa.

USA redeployment of troops

US forces send military reinforcements through the Al Walid border crossing towards Deir ez Zor province, which is controlled by SDF and coalition forces. A second convoy of 35 armored US army vehicles proceeded on the Hasakah - Qamishlo road in the night, accompanied by airplanes.

ISIS Resurgence

In the night of the 26th - 27th October the ISIS leader Abu Bakr-Baghdadi was killed in US military raid in the region of Idlib. The operation was conducted from Erbil (KRG Iraq) and not from US-held Incirlik airbase in Turkey. Some resources claimed that this was in order to avoid passing information on to the Turkish intelligence agency. Abu Bakr-Baghdadi was found and killed 6km from the Turkish border. SDF general Mazloum Abdi announced that in direct coordination between the SDF intelligence and US military, terrorist Abu Al-Hassan Al-Muhajir, the right-hand man of Abu Bakr-Baghdadi and an ISIS spokesman, was targeted and killed in the village of Ain al-Baydah near Jarablus on the Turkish border. US forces say they are taking "extraordinary" security measures to counter the possible response of ISIS to the killing of Abu Bakr-Baghdadi. Another two ISIS suspects were captured near the village of Salhiya as SDF anti-ISIS operations continue.

Humanitarian crisis

The first 15 families arrived at Newroz refugee camp near city of Derik; more will arrive in the coming days. Gawilan Camp in Duhok, KRG Iraq, has been expanded to house newly arrived refugees from North and East Syria as Bardarash Camp cannot host any new refugees. The first 346 arrived today.