North and East Syria after the Turkish military invasion on the 9.10.2019
Situation of civilians after four days of war
Information Dossier

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Since the 9th of October 4:00 PM (EEST/GMT+3) the Turkish army and affiliated jihadist groups have been engaged in a military operation against Northern Syria. This has included heavy air strikes in the regions of Serekaniye (Ras al-Ayn) and Gire Spi (Tel Abyad), and bombings and shellings all along the border including the cities of Derik, Rimelan, Qamishlo, Amude, Dirbesiye, Serekaniye, Gire Spi, Kobane, Manbij and Ayn-Issa. There is an ongoing land incursion from the Turkish Army and affiliated groups in the regions of Serekaniye and Gire Spi.

Despite Turkey’s announcement that it is not targeting civilians, all official sources report the endangering of and damage to civilian life. The following report documents the effects on civilians after four days of war, up to and including the 12th of October.

Infrastructure targeted

Airstrikes and ground-based attacks have affected key civilian infrastructure. Attacks on water pumping stations, bakeries, dams, power stations, and oil fields are reported. On the 9th October a Turkish airstrike hit the main water supply station in the area of Alouk in al-Hassakeh governorate. As a result of this, water reportedly ceased to flow from the supply station. 500,000 people that depend on this water station will be deprived of adequate access to clean water.

The water shortage also effects the hospitals in the region. It is reported that hospitals have been running on a limited supply. A bread factory was shelled in Qamishlo by the Turkish army.

On the 12 of October the Turkish army bombed a wheat storage facility in Qamishlo, in Qinat El-Siwês neighbourhood. The hospital of Serekaniye (Ras al-Ayn) was evacuated due to attacks in the surrounding area. On the 12th of October the trauma stabilisation point of the medical NGO Kurdish Red Crescent (Heyva Sor) was targeted south of Serekaniye. Ambulance movement in and out of Serekaniye was purposefully attacked. The roads from the city are being targeted by Turkish forces.

3 Rovaja Information Center: Daily report about situation in North and East Syria.12.10.2019: https://twitter.com/RojavaIC/status/1182940216589475840
4 https://anfenglishmobile.com/features/resistance-against-occupation-growing-12-october-live-blog-38301
5 Heyva Sor: https://twitter.com/Heyva_Sor/status/1182943580962377728
snipers and shelling. Fuel infrastructure was targeted in Rimelan. The Turkish army targeted the Assyrian Church of Mary in the village of Tal Djihane, northwest of Al Kahtanya/Tirbespiyê, with heavy weapons.

**Displacement of people**

From the commencement of the attacks, waves of displaced people have been moving away from the affected areas without being able to find safe refuge as the attacks are extending. Roads of North East Syria are crowded with people fleeing the attacks. The Semalka border crossing is swollen with refugees trying to escape to the Kurdish region of Iraq. The artillery and air strikes on Gire Spi and Serekaniye has lead to the forced displacement of the entire civil population in these regions. On the 11th of October Gire Spi was entirely evacuated of civilians. At least one village in the Derik region was also evacuated. The United Nations Human Needs Assessment Programme calculates the number of displaced people from just the first two days of the conflict as 191,069 - the number now probably exceeds 200,000. Most displaced people have fled to Ain Issa, Raqqa, Til Tamir or Haseke. The Mabruka refugee camp, which housed 3,776 internally displaced people (63% of whom are children) was evacuated and relocated to Areesha camp south of Haseke. Humanitarian organisation and NGOs operating in North and East Syria have been withdrawing staff. This is threatening the service everywhere they were active and puts more burden on the local organisations. In al-Hol camp, where tens of thousands of ISIS-affiliated fighters and families are held, staff have been withdrawn.

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6 Rovaja Information Center: Daily report about situation in North and East Syria. 12.10.2019: https://twitter.com/RojavalC/status/1182940216589475840
7 Rovaja Information Center: Daily report about situation in North and East Syria. 11.10.2019: https://twitter.com/RojavalC/status/1182550915573829632
9 Rovaja Information Center: Daily report about situation in North and East Syria. 12.10.2019: https://twitter.com/RojavalC/status/1182940216589475840
10 Rovaja Information Center: Daily report about situation in North and East Syria. 12.10.2019: https://twitter.com/RojavalC/status/1182940216589475840
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14 Rovaja Information Center: Daily report about situation in North and East Syria. 12.10.2019: https://twitter.com/RojavalC/status/1182940216589475840
Civilian casualties

There are reports of direct targeting of civilians, such as the shelling of a peaceful demonstration in Gire Spi on the 10th of October. In this same vein, a civil convoy with civilians and government officials was shelled on the road between Gire Spi and Raqqa.16 Fleeing civilians taking the roads from Serekaniye to Haseke were fired at by Turkish snipers whilst wounded and fleeing.17 Shellings targeted the largest Christian neighborhood (Bisheriya) in Qamishlo. Due to the attacks two Christian civilians were killed and civilian houses were burned.18 In Qamishlo a Syriac Christian couple, Fady Habsula and Juliette Negola, have been killed. In Serekaniye, a Syriac Christian civilian was killed as well as one other civilian, and two more injured.19 Villages populated by Syriac Christians and Yezidis surrounding Tirbespiye were shelled by Turkish army.20

The city of Gire Spi, which is a majority Sunni Arab population, was the target of heavy attacks from Turkey.21 Hevrin Khalaf, the co-chair of the Syria Future Party, was killed in an attack by the Syrian National Army (established from jihadist groups like al-Nusra, ISIS and others by Erdogan at the beginning of this war22) whilst on the road with her driver. The driver was also killed.23 The Turkish daily newspaper Yeni Şafak afterwards declared that Hevrin Khalaf was “neutralized in a successful operation”.24

16 Rovaja Information Center: Daily report about situation in North and East Syria. 11.10.2010: https://twitter.com/RojavaIC/status/1182550915573829632
17 Rovaja Information Center: Daily report about situation in North and East Syria. 10.10.2010 https://twitter.com/RojavaIC/status/1182201514644910080
18 Rovaja Information Center: Daily report about situation in North and East Syria. 10.10.2019: https://twitter.com/RojavaIC/status/1182201514644910080
19 https://indefenseofchristians.salsalabs.org/pressrelease_idcconfirmsturkeykillschristians?wvpId=d1fa25d7-75b4-43d8-95e3-77e9e46de4a4
21 Rovaja Information Center: Daily report about situation in North and East Syria.12.10.2019: https://twitter.com/RojavaIC/status/1182940216589475840
23 Turkey Untold, https://twitter.com/TurkeyUntold/status/1183029319335067649
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**Number of wounded or killed civilians**

Deaths: 35, among them at least three women and three minors
Wounded: 100, among them at least eight women and eight minors

25 According to the Kurdish Red Crescent Heyva Sor

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26 https://twitter.com/laraseligman/status/1183222409853308928

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Car of Hevrin Khalaf, co-chair of Future of Syria Party, after her assassination by a Turkish-backed group

Shepherd Salah Said Hamki from Beṣta Sûs village, Derik region, dies due to Turkish army bombing the village of Pirkê on the 12th of October

Source: Kurdish Red Crescent Heyva Sor

Eight year old brother of Sara, Mohammad Yusuf, died due to Turkish attack on Qamishlo on the 10th of October

Sara Yusud, eight year old, wounded on the 10th of October in Qamishlo

Source: Kurdish Red Crescent Heyva Sor
Human Rights violations in Turkish occupied Afrin

In January 2018 the Turkish Army started an invasion of Afrin, violating international law. Afrin, like the areas that are currently attacked, belonged to the Autonomous Self-Administration of North- and East-Syria. The Turkish army invaded and occupied Afrin territories in co-ordination with allied armed jihadist groups. Severe human rights violations against civilians are documented, and are reminiscent of the violations in the current situation. E.g. the targeting of drinking water networks and convoys of civilians have both been extensively documented in Afrin.27

The ongoing Turkish occupation in Afrin is still enacting severe human rights violations according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. There are reports of looting, systematic forms of torture, kidnapping, sexual enslavement of women, ransom and murder carried out by Turkish-backed forces.28 Numbers of residents of Afrin displaced by the Turkish invasion and occupation are estimated around 110,000. Until now they live under harsh conditions in camps in Shehba region, where attacks from Turkish-backed jihadist groups have also been documented taking place against them.29

Report written by the campaign committee Women Defend Rojava

Kongra Star Diplomacy

Contact: womendefendrojava@protonmail.com

Homepage and social media:

www.womendefendrojava.net

Facebook: Kongra Star Diplomacy

https://eng.kongra-star.org