

To the Rescue of ISIS: Turkey Prepares Ground Invasion of Syria

International Military Review – Syria

By [South Front](#)

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On Jan. 20, Russian warplanes have carried out 16 sorties and destroyed 57 terrorist targets in Syria with airstrikes only taking place in Latakia and Deir ez-Zor provinces due to bad weather.

The Russian Air Force destroyed a field camp held by ISIS in Deir ez-Zor including the terrorists' multiple rocket launchers, artillery and fuel storage located there. Also, the terrorists' rocket artillery positions and a fuel depot in the vicinity of the village of Bgelia were targeted.

A ISIS field training camp including the militants' command post and barracks in the vicinity of the village of Mreya in Deir ez Zor province was also destroyed. Separately, the Russian jets hit the terrorists near Jabal al-Akrad as they fled Latakia being attacked by the Syrian Arab Army (SAA).

There are growing indications that Turkey is preparing a ground invasion in Syria. The Turks are determined to make the so-called "buffer zone" stretching along the Syrian side of the Turkey-Syria border. It's clear that Erdogan needs this zone to defend supply lines of the Ankara-backed terrorist groups and the oil smuggling business. It would also prevent the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) from expanding their reach westward.

In what could be a sign of this intent, Turkish minesweeping vehicles have started clearing mines along a section of the border near the Syrian town of Jarabulus controlled by ISIS. Turkey has also ramped up its artillery strikes along its border with Syria. The public reason is to help its militant allies against ISIS. Indeed, it's another move heading to the buffer zone in Northern Syria. What prevent Turkey from a full-scale invasion, it's a possible military answer of the Russian grouping located in Syria amid refuse of the US to support this risky choice.

However, Turkey may decide to move forward with its operation anyway. The SAA supported by the Russian Airspace Forces is continuing to gain the ground in Latakia and Aleppo. The very same time, the Kurdish YPG is advancing westward toward the ISIS-controlled town of Manbij. Each of these developments decreases expected outcomes of the regional anti-Assad alliance – Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar – in the Syrian conflict.

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