

Video: Fall of Saraqib: Syrian Army Retreat Under Turkish Strikes in Eastern Idlib

By [South Front](#)

Global Research, February 28, 2020

[South Front](#) 27 February 2020

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#)

In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

Members of al-Qaeda-linked groups embedded with Turkish troops have reentered the town of Saraqib in eastern Idlib following the collapse of the Syrian Army defense northwest of the town.

The attack was backed by Turkish artillery strikes on positions of the Syrian Army. Al-Qaeda members were actively using Turkish-supplied armoured vehicles and even MANPADs.

Since the evening of February 26, government troops have lost the villages of Salihiya and Afis and been forced to retreat towards the eastern and southern vicinities of Saraqib. Turkish forces reportedly captured three battle tanks, including a Russian-supplied T-90, in the course of the attack. Several other military vehicles were destroyed. Earlier, Syrian troops withdrew from Nayrab leaving behind 2 battle tanks, 4 armoured vehicles and 2 bulldozers as well as other weapons and equipment.

The Turkish Defense Ministry reported on February 26 that 2 Turkish soldiers were killed and 2 others injured in a Syrian airstrike. This became another official confirmation of the participation of Turkish troops in the fighting.

https://southfront.org/wp-content/uploads/video/IMR_27_02_2020.mp4

The fall of Saraqib is a major blow to the plans of the Damascus government to reopen the M5 highway and to threaten Idlib city with a possible offensive operation.

Local sources name the Syrian Army overcommitment to the advance south of the M4 highway as one of the causes of the recent setbacks in Saraqib. According to them, a large number of trained and experienced units, including the 25th Special Forces Division and the 4th Division, were redeployed from Saraqib to southern Idlib. Other issues are the lack of coordination among pro-government units and close-air-support.

According to pro-government sources, on the morning of February 27 army troops regrouped and launched a counter-attack. Clashes are ongoing.

The setbacks of government forces in Saraqib came amid the ongoing army advance in the southern part of the Idlib zone. Syrian troops have cleared another dozen villages of militants and reached the administrative border with the province of Hama. Now, the militant strongholds of Sahn and Barah are the two main obstacles in the way of the Syrian Army towards the M4 highway.

However, if government forces are not able to stabilize the frontline in the area of Saraqib

and put an end to advances by Turkish-led forces, the gains in southern Idlib may not be enough to achieve a strategic victory over al-Qaeda in Idlib.

*

Note to readers: please click the share buttons above or below. Forward this article to your email lists. Crosspost on your blog site, internet forums. etc.

Support South Front in its endeavors. *If you're able, and if you like our content and approach, please support the project. Our work wouldn't be possible without your help:* PayPal: southfront@list.ru or via: <http://southfront.org/donate/> or via: <https://www.patreon.com/southfront>

The original source of this article is [South Front](#)
Copyright © [South Front](#), [South Front](#), 2020

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [South Front](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca
www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca