

Video: The Battle for Idlib is Ongoing. Turkish Forces to the Rescue of “Peaceful Al Qaeda Militants”

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During the last few days, Turkey deployed approximately 1,000 units of military equipment, including self-propelled howitzers, M06T and Leopard 2A4 battle tanks, in the Syrian province of Idlib. According to local sources, the number of Turkish troops and special forces personnel in the province is now between 2,500 and 3,000.

The Turkish leadership assures the international community that this is a solely defensive move. Ankara says this was needed to combat the terrorism and **protect its troops from the aggression of the Assad regime that blatantly violated the Idlib de-escalation by attacking peaceful al-Qaeda militants.**

Additionally, the Turkish Army set up several positions east and southeast of Idlib city. It seems like brave Erdogan forces ready to protect the stronghold of their comrades from Hayat Tahrir al-Sham at the expense of their life. However, a few Turkish troops apparently lost in the woods and missed the Syrian Army advance in western Idlib and southwestern Aleppo.

Pro-government forces captured over a dozen of villages along the M5 highway, including the key rebel base of Al-Eis, and encircled another Turkish observation point accidentally located just at positions of al-Qaeda-linked militants. In western Aleppo, the Syrians took control of Tal Kalariyah and Kalariyah, and advanced on Rashideen 4. If the Damascus government wants to fully reopen the M5 highway, which runs from the border with Jordan to Aleppo, it needs to secure Rashideen 4, Khan Asal and several less important points in the same area.

https://southfront.org/wp-content/uploads/video/IMR_10_02_2020.mp4

Such news are horrible to the ears of the Turkish leadership. **President Recep Tayyip Erdogan** and other top officials act like they see every inch of territory lost by terrorists to the Syrian Army as grievous loss of their imaginary Neo-Ottoman Empire.

On February 8, Ankara hosted a Russian-Turkish meeting on the situation in Idlib. From the Turkish side, the meeting was attended by **Deputy Foreign Minister Sedat Onal** and representatives of the Defense Ministry, General Staff and National Intelligence Organization. Russian delegation was chaired by **Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Vershinin** and special envoy on Syria **Alexander Lavrentiev** as well as representatives from military and intelligence. The sides reached a breakthrough agreement that more

negotiations are needed. The new round of talks will take place this week.

The Syrian Air Force celebrated the Ankara negotiations with over 120 airstrikes on various positions of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham and other 'moderate Al-Qaeda' groups in the provinces of Idlib and Aleppo. Russian airstrikes were also reported.

While Turkey aggressively increasing its military presence near Idlib city and **working to convince leaders of local groups to not hurry up with fleeing the area**, Syria and its allies are using the window of opportunities to clear from terrorists as much area as it's possible.

On February 10, 'al-Qaeda freedom fighters' launched a powerful attack on positions of pro-government forces near Saraqib. Militants publicly employed Turkish-supplied military equipment and weapons. The attack itself was also supported by Turkish artillery strikes. Turkish troops were filmed close with near the frontline. They directed the attack of their brothers in arms on the Syrian Army. At least 5 Turkish personnel were reportedly killed in the retaliatory strikes by the Syrian Army.

The battle for Idlib is ongoing.

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