

Video: Turkish Attack on Ain Issa Turns into Failure

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The last few days in Syria was marked by a serious military escalation in the north of the country.

Members of pro-Turkish militant groups, supported by Turkish combat drones and artillery, launched an attack on the town of Ain Issa, controlled by the so-called Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). The SDF is a Kurdish-dominated armed group that receives financial, weapon and training support from the United States. Turkey considers the SDF to be a terrorist group due to its links with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). Tensions between the SDF and Turkish-led forces in northeastern Syria are a source of the permanent instability.

The attack on Ain Issa started on December 18 and lasted until the evening of December 20, but resulted in a total failure. The only tactical success achieved by pro-Turkish forces took place in the Ain Issa countryside, where they briefly entered the villages of Mushayrifah and Jableh located in a de-facto no man's land. Nonetheless, even these villages remained a contested area.



As of December 21, the situation in the countryside of Ain Issa remains relatively stable and no side conducts active offensive operations. So far, the only impact of the Turkish actions is the increased presence of the Syrian Army and the Russian Military Police in the area. Abandoned by its main backer in the face of another Turkish attack, the SDF is forced to continue a slow rapprochement with the Damascus government and its Russian allies.

Meanwhile, on the eastern bank of the Euphrates, ISIS cells launched several rockets at the US military facilities in the Omar oil fields. The rockets allegedly targeted US positions on the evening of December 17, when a US supply convoy was entering the area. The attack triggered a series of security operations by coalition forces along the bank of the Euphrates. Nonetheless, no details regarding their results are available.

ISIS cells are also active on the western bank of the river. According to reports, over 100 ISIS terrorists and Syrian soldiers died in clashes in the Homs-Deir Ezzor desert during the past month. Even if the numbers provided by pro-opposition sources are exaggerated, the high intensity of clashes with terrorists is being reported by the Syrian Army and its allies themselves.

Therefore, additionally to the permanent tensions in Greater Idlib, where al-Qaeda-linked terrorists still enjoy the protection of the Turkish military, the terrorist threat has once again become a visible issue in eastern Syria.

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