



Northeastern Syria: Unprecedented Turkish Strikes on Energy Infrastructure

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سوريون
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International law obliges Turkey not to deprive, directly or indirectly, civilians of life-affirming necessities

Warning: The following report contains material that might be harmful or traumatizing to some audiences.





Executive Summary

On 20 November 2022, the Turkish military launched Operation Claw-Sword in parts of Syria and Iraq. In Syria, the Turkish air force carried out a series of airstrikes on dozens of critical sites in the northeastern territories, using aircraft and drones. The airstrikes injured and killed civilians, destroyed oil infrastructure and terminals, and rendered several other energy facilities in the area inoperable.

With the new incursion, Turkey purportedly is responding to the terrorist attack on Taksim Street, for which the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) have denied responsibility.

In a [statement](#) on 20 November, the SDF said: “Turkey has been planning to launch a large-scale attack on regions north and east of Syria for a long time, especially after the bombing in Istanbul. The bombing is a plot of their design, a pretext they are using to threaten our areas within these regions.”

The SDF added that the Turkish airstrikes targeted the areas of al-Malikiyah/Derik, al-Dirbasiyah, Zarkan/Abu Rasin, Kobanî/Ayn al-Arab, Tall Rifat, and al-Shahbaa.

Over the first hours of the operation, Turkish airstrikes targeted a power station in Takel [Bakel/Kinanah](#) village in the suburbs of al-Malikiyah/Derik. The attack killed 11 civilians, including a [journalist](#), and injured six others. The strike on the power station was the third of its kind.

The recent incursion was locally and internationally condemned. In a joint [statement](#), 200 Syrian organizations renounced the renewed Turkish hostilities in Northeastern Syria. Additionally, the organizations demanded that the United Nations Security Council hold an emergency meeting regarding the military escalation, exert pressure to stop the hostilities, and act on the provisions of international law to protect civilians and infrastructure.

On the international level, Audrey Azoulay, the Director-General of UNESCO, [condemned](#) the killing of reporter Essam Abdullah in an airstrike in northern Syria on 20 November and reiterated countries’ obligation to protect journalists.

For its part, Human Rights Watch [expressed](#) concern for local communities. The organization said: “Turkish airstrikes are inflicting damage on densely populated areas and critical infrastructure across north and northeast Syria and exacerbating an already catastrophic humanitarian crisis for Kurds, Arabs, and other communities in the region.”

Despite the large-scale condemnation, the Turkish military intensified airstrikes and artillery shelling on the third and fourth days of the operation. The attacks targeted vital oil, gas, and electricity infrastructure in the countryside of al-Hasakah province, denying local communities in the affected areas and millions of residents across other Syrian territories access to energy.

Notably, Turkey launched the attacks amidst talks of potential rapprochement with the Syrian government, which remained “[silent](#)” when Ankara announced the start of Operation “Claw-Sword”. Unlike responses to the previous operations—through which Turkey occupied territories in northeastern Syria— the Syrian government only commented on the deaths of several soldiers, calling the attack on its forces an “assault.”





Similarly, the attacks were underreported by the state-run *Syrian Arab News Agency* (SANA). The outlet only [reported](#) that: “Suwaidiyah Power Plant went out of service . . . after it was targeted by the Turkish occupation warplanes,” while it ignored the multiple strikes on oil facilities in al-Hasakah’s countryside.

On the Turkish side, shortly after Operation Claw-Sword began, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan [reiterated](#) the possibility of meeting his Syrian counterpart Bashar al-Assad, even before the Turkish parliamentary elections, slated for June 2023.

In this report, Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ) presents the first-hand accounts of eight locals from the bombarded areas. The interviewees include two eyewitnesses to the Turkish massacre in Takel Bakel village, five witnesses to the shelling of several critical facilities in al-Qahtaniyah/Terbasbiyah town, and a relief worker in Hol Camp, who elaborated on the impact of the operation on relief work.

Massacre in al-Malikiyah/Derik

On 22 November 2022, around 3:00 a.m. (Syria time), Turkish warplanes targeted the fourth power station in Takel Bakel village in al-Malikiyah/Derik’s countryside with at least three airstrikes at nearly one-hour intervals.

During the third raid, the warplanes bombarded the station four times. The shelling killed and wounded several civilians who rushed to the site of the attacks to assist people injured in the previous strikes.

Documenting the impact of the brutal Turkish shelling on the station, STJ reached out to the Co-Chair of the al-Malikiyah/Derik Local Council, Muhammad Abdulrahim Abdo, on 29 November 2022. Abdo narrated:

“[Turkish aircraft] first bombarded the power station in Takel Bakel village at about midnight and hit it again a few minutes later. The bombing targeted the fourth station, which provides electricity to a cluster of villages in the al-Koujarat area in al-Malikiyah’s countryside. The shelling killed one of the station’s guards, destroyed the entire station, and damaged the pump installed near it. A group of civilians tried to reach the bombarded location to check if any people at the station were injured. Once they arrived there, at around 1:30 a.m., the aircraft launched a second airstrike, killing one person and wounding another. . . Sometime later, [local council representatives], a group of civilians, and an ambulance headed to the location. We intended to inspect the place for potential casualties and to read a statement renouncing the Turkish shelling on a service facility vital to people’s livelihoods. However, we stopped at [Beroj](#) (al-Batraa/KaraJokh, Karachok) village for a while. A U.S. patrol of four armored vehicles arrived there. We could hear the reconnaissance aircraft hovering above and were cautious not to approach the location so as not to be targeted. When the U.S. patrol arrived, we decided to accompany it to the targeted location, convinced that the Turkish aircraft would not dare to target us. [We went there] because, in such circumstances, it is natural to hurry to assist the wounded. Additionally, we wanted the world to hear our voices, so we made a [statement](#) in the presence of about 20 civilians. Less than 15 minutes later, a warplane hit a location close to where we assembled. A few minutes after the U.S. patrol left, the warplane struck a second time. We were





targeted with missiles four times in total. The first and second shelling caused minor injuries among us. The third shelling happened after a pause, during which civilians tried to get in their cars. On the third time, the warplane targeted a civilian vehicle that rode behind the U.S. patrol. This attack killed all seven civilians in the vehicle and two others that just happened to be nearby.”

Abdo added:

“The warplanes targeted the station at three intervals that night. The attacks injured five civilians and killed 11 others, including journalist Essam Abdullah and the vehicle’s owner, Nazir Jwayel. Jwayel was a 65-year-old shepherd. We were shocked that the warplanes carried out airstrikes under the watch of the U.S.-led coalition forces. We were also stunned by the large amounts of ammunition used to target us. The munitions created deep holes in the ground and caused damage to the site, which led to power outages in at least 15 villages. Turkey was following Russia’s shelling pattern that targets Ukrainian infrastructure on which people’s lives depend.”



Image (1)- Posted by the Rojava Information Center (RIC), the photo shows the impact of the Turkish strikes on the power station in Takel Bakel/Kinanah village. The RIC captioned the photo, saying: “Following the first Turkish airstrike in Takel Bakel, nearby civilians congregated at the site of the attack. The Turkish military then hit a vehicle that drove away from the location, likely using a drone, not an aircraft. The same location was reportedly bombarded twice.” ([source](#))





Image (2)-The photo marks out a few locations from the above-listed live image and matches them with satellite footage. ([Location](#)).

For additional details about the attack on the power station, STJ reached out to Shireen Farho (46), who is a resident of the al-Malikiyah/Derik city. She narrated:

“Hadiyeh Abdullah, [Essam Abdullah](#)—a reporter for the Hawar News Agency (ANHA), and I headed to the targeted location in Takel Bakel village. We boarded Hussein Khalto’s car. On the way there, we ran into a U.S. patrol moving in the same direction. We heard that people were injured and that blood donations might be needed. We also saw a group of civilians, mainly fathers, mothers, and old people, who wanted to go there to check on family members. The aircraft were audible. The interpreter accompanying the U.S. patrol got off the vehicle to talk to us. However, a few minutes later, he received a call on his tablet. He was alarmed and told us that a Turkish aircraft was about to hit us. In Kurdish, he asked us to disperse immediately. Before the attack, we saw a flash of light emanating from the aircraft's direction. I am unsure if it was signaling the U.S. patrol to leave. Only a few seconds later, the aircraft hit near where we gathered. Once the U.S. patrol left, a series of airstrikes followed. The shelling hit a car that carried civilians. The car belonged to a shepherd, Abu Jwayel, who went to the area to check on his son. The son worked as a guard there. The aircraft hit the car nearly 100 meters away from the station. The attack killed all the civilians in the car and two near it while it injured a third severely.”

Farho added:

“The attacks were targeted. The warplanes used missiles that caused great destruction. I miraculously escaped the bombing with a few civilians. We dispersed into the surrounding area. I then took refuge with a family from the neighboring village of Beroj/Karachok. I spent the night at their place.”



Farho provided STJ with a photo, saying it was of the rear part of the vehicle the Turkish aircraft targeted. The image shows a pickup truck with its cargo bed full of charred bodies and its frame full of holes, resembling the marks left by shelling from a close range.

In a video of the same truck, the fire could be seen devouring dead bodies in the cargo bed and raging in the cab, with body parts and a severely injured dead body scattered around it.



Image (3)-STJ obtained this exclusive photo from the sources interviewed for this report. The sources said this image was of civilians killed in a Turkish strike on the power station in Takel Bakel village.





On 21 November 2022, freelance photojournalist Orhan Qereman published [exclusive footage](#) of the targeted location and vehicle with Reuters. STJ matched the visuals from Reuters with those obtained from the report's sources and linked both to satellite images.



Image (4)- Posted by Reuters, the photo shows the vehicle destroyed in a Turkish strike on the power station in Takel Bakel village in al-Malikiyah/Derik. Credit: Photojournalist [Orhan Qereman](#).

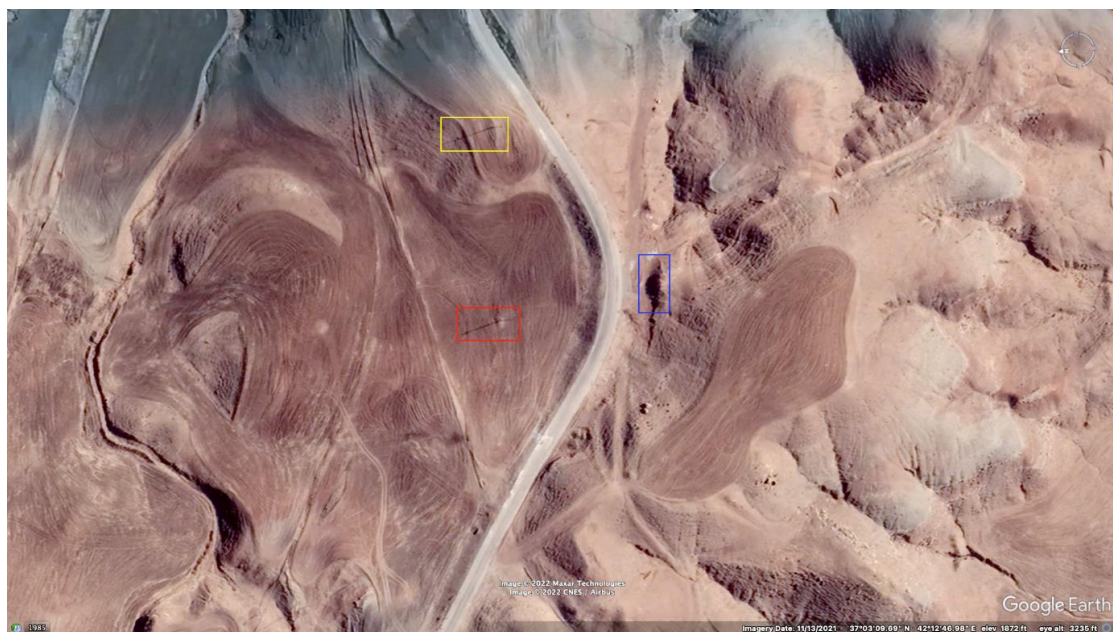


Image (5)- The photo marks out some elements from the above-listed live photo and matches it with satellite imagery.





Image (6)-STJ's photo matched with Reuter's photo, showing the vehicle hit in the Turkish airstrike.





Image (7)- Screenshots from an exclusive video STJ obtained from the sources interviewed for this report. The footage documents the onset of a Turkish airstrike on the power station in Takel Bakel village and the body parts of the civilians killed in the attack.





In addition to the visuals, STJ compiled the names of the civilian casualties of the Turkish airstrikes, collected from witnesses, and local and medical sources.

Dead Civilians:

1. Journalist Essam Abdullah.
2. Hussein Ali.
3. Hilal Qassem.
4. Hadiyeh Abdullah.
5. Obaid Khaled.
6. Fayez Abdullah.
7. Jijek Harouni.
8. Nouri Jaftaji.
9. Hussein Khalto.
10. Mazen Ossi.
11. Mahmoud Ali.

Injured Civilians:

1. Nazir Jwayel (65).
2. Muhammad Hawas (26).
3. Matin Karou (20).
4. Andouk Ali (35).
5. Said Jankir (30).
6. Wasefeddin (30-his family name remains unidentified).

Notably, this is not the first time Turkish aircraft bombarded the power station in Takel Bakel village. In early February, the Turkish air force hit the station with four missiles, two of which did not explode. The airstrike injured four civilians [according to North Press](#), a local media outlet.

Civilian Objects Targeted

In tandem with the airstrikes on Takel Bakel village, the Turkish military attacked other areas in northeastern Syria. One of the attacks completely destroyed a [COVID-19 Care Facility](#) in Kobanî/Ayn al-Arab city, north of Raqqa. According to officials from the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria, “Work was underway to transform the facility into a children's hospital after the pandemic subsided.”

The [airstrikes](#) took a toll on the journalists that were at the site of the attacks in Kobanî/Ayn al-Arab city. While covering the strike on the care facility, Muhammad Jradeh, a correspondent for Kurdish [Stêrk TV](#), was injured in the head.





Image (8)- The destruction inflicted upon the COVID-19 Care Facility in Kobani/Ayn al-Arab city by the Turkish airstrikes. Credit: Hawar News Agency ([ANHA](#)).



Image (9)- A building in the vicinity of the COVID-19 Care Facility in Kobani/Ayn al-Arab city was also destroyed during the Turkish airstrikes. Credit: [Hawar News Agency](#) (ANHA). (Location)





Image (10)- The photo marks out some elements from the above-listed live photo and matches it with satellite imagery. (Location).

On the second day of the Turkish operation, infrastructure destruction was documented in Tall Hamdoun village, in the countryside of Amuda city, where warplanes targeted a school. On the second and third days, the Turkish air force widened the scope of their attacks. Turkish aircraft targeted several oil and gas facilities in the rural parts of al-Qahtaniyah/Terbasbiyah, al-Jawadiyah/ Çil Axa, and al-Malikiyah/Derik.

To document the damage inflicted on energy infrastructure, STJ reached out to a local from Tal Bri/Girê Pirê in the countryside of al-Qahtaniyah/Terbasbiyah, Abdulaziz Muhammad (52). Muhammad has been an employee at the main facilities of the Odeh oil field for ten years. He narrated:

“On 23 November, when the main facility of the Odeh oil field was bombarded for the first time, I was working at one of the field’s hangars. The bombing happened sometime between 10:00 and 11:00 a.m. We went outside and discovered that the oil terminals had been bombarded. Shortly after, the field was targeted for the second time. We left the facility. I returned to my home in the village. Nearly half an hour later, the field was hit again, twice. The terminal was the target this time as well. Afterward, other sites of the Odeh oil field were bombarded. Similar strikes targeted the Saida and Zarba oil fields, located north of al-Qahtaniyah, and the [Ali Agha field](#), located in the countryside of al-Malikiyah. A drone had likely targeted the Odeh field. The sounds were not as strong as the noises of a warplane but rather more like the buzzing of insects.”

Muhammad added:

“The shelling did not harm any of the personnel at the Odeh facilities. However, it expanded and targeted the major gathering stations there. This rendered the Rmelan oil field completely out of service, causing power and water interruptions in villages across the area. These villages get their electricity from the oil pipeline network.”



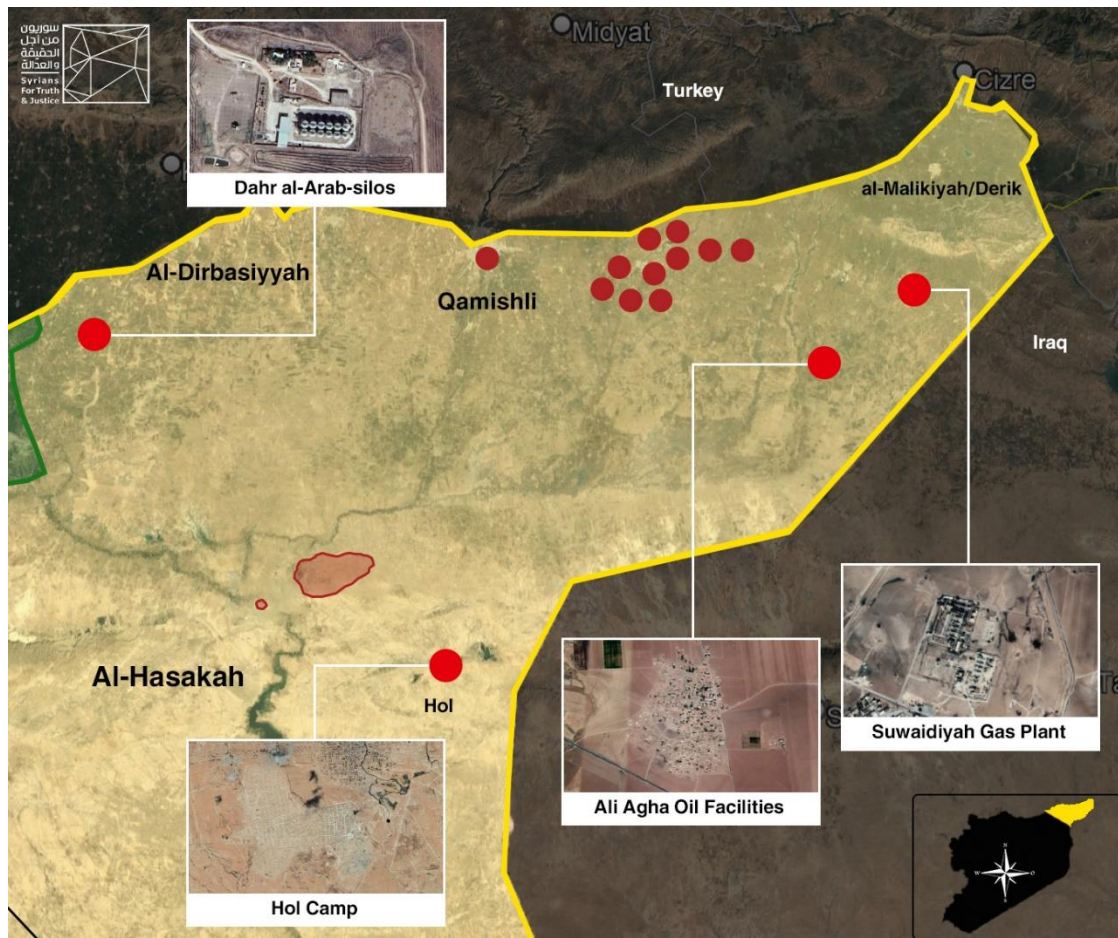


Image (11) – Designed by STJ, the map locates the areas Turkish airstrikes targeted in northeastern Syria.

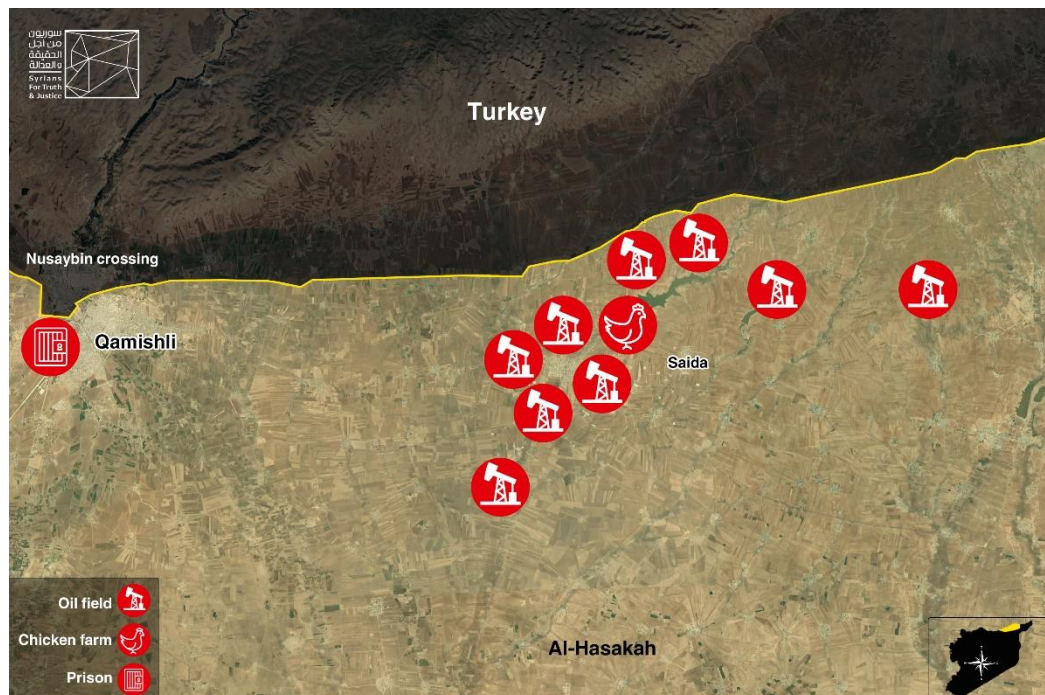


Image (12)- Designed by STJ, the map locates oil fields targeted by the Turkish air force.



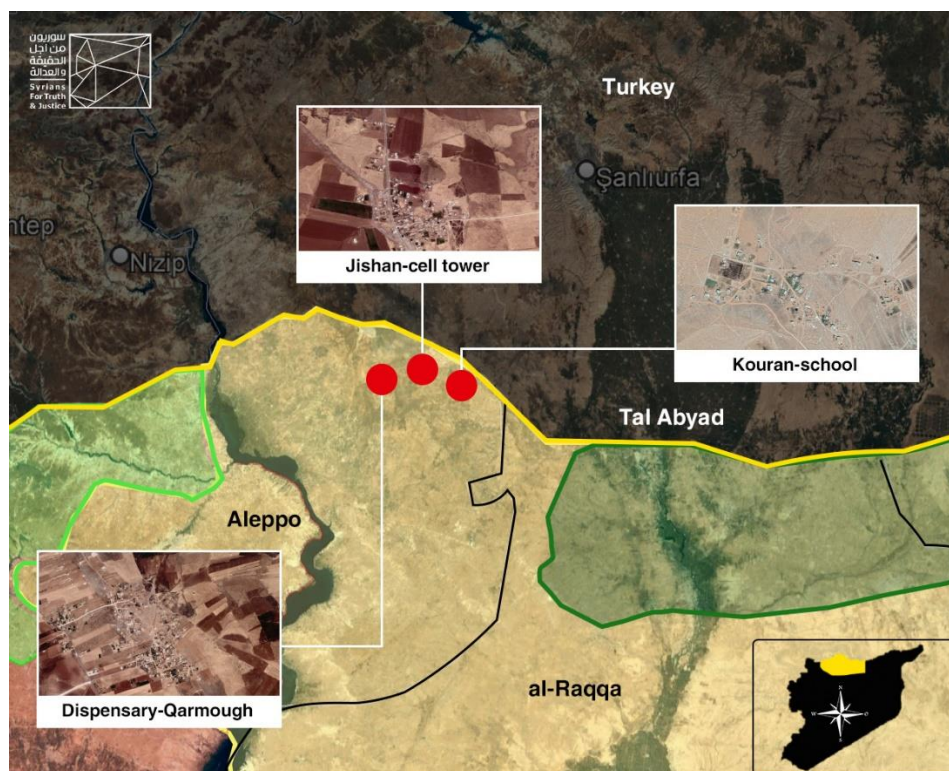


Image (13)- Designed by STJ, the map locates a number of the civilian objects Turkish airstrikes targeted in Kobani/Ayn al-Arab city.

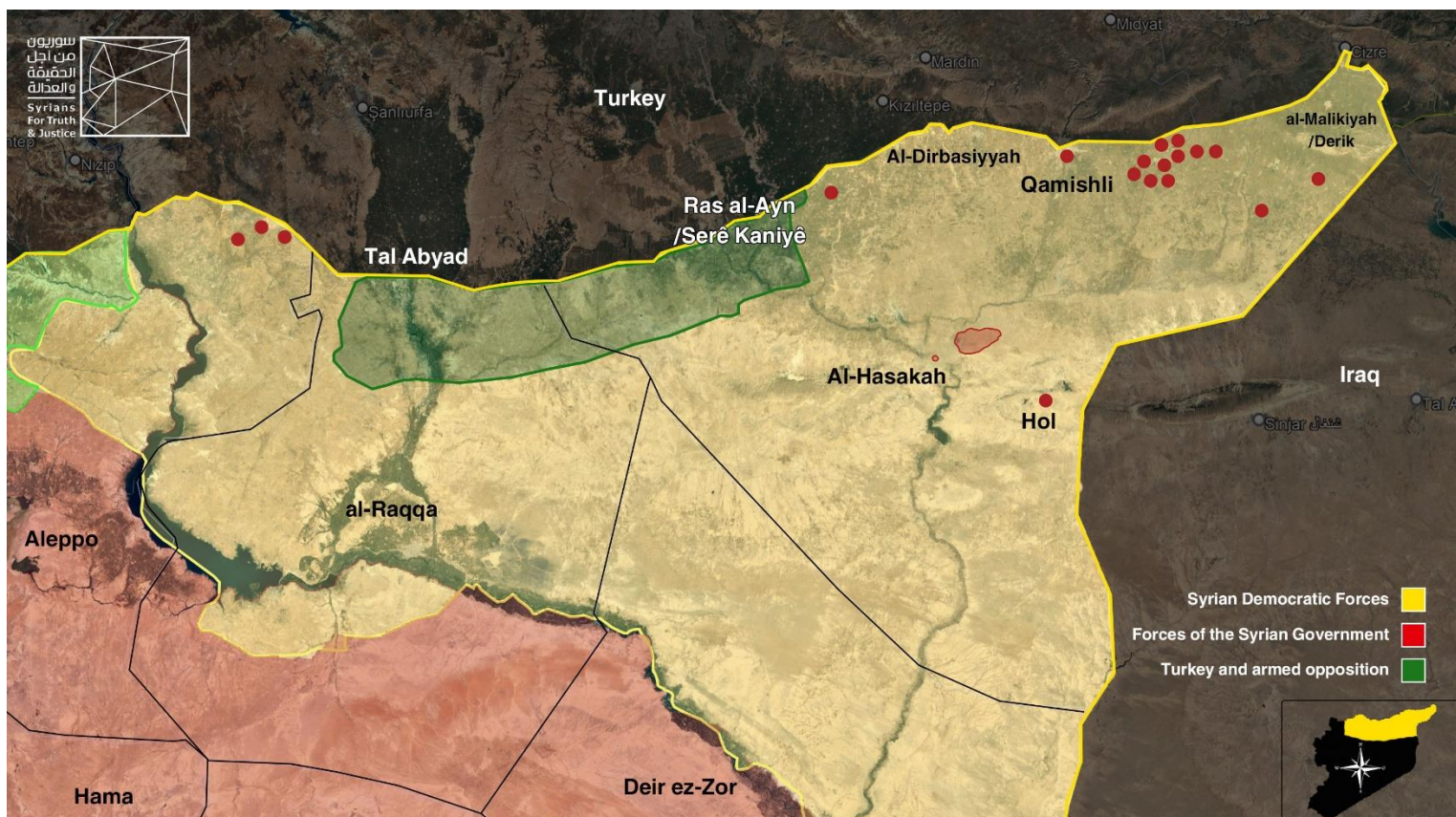


Image (14) – Designed by STJ, the map locates the oil fields, gas plants, and civilian objects targeted by the Turkish warplanes.





For further details on the attacks on the oil fields, STJ reached out to a second local from Tal Bri/ Girê Pirê in the countryside of al-Qahtaniyah/Terbasbiyah, Samih Ali Ali (44). He narrated:

"I was at the rooftop of my house, checking the satellite dish to watch the World Cup tournament. I saw two helicopters, which probably belonged to the U.S.-led Coalition against Daesh. They were flying over the main [facilities of the] Odeh oil field. Nearly five minutes later, the field, which lies approximately 2 kilometers away from our village, was targeted. During the airstrike, three airplanes hovered, two drones, and an aircraft. These were likely the warplanes that bombed a group of wells and oil fields around us."

While Ali was on his rooftop, Kourkin Daham Faris (52) stood outside his shop, observing the same scene. Faris, also from Tal Bri/ Girê Pirê in the countryside of al-Qahtaniyah/Terbasbiyah, recounted:

"It was nearly 10:00 a.m. I was standing in front of my shop. I saw two coalition helicopters hovering above the facility, one flying at a higher altitude. We often see these two helicopters hovering over U.S. patrols, which pass through the area and across our village regularly. Less than ten minutes after the helicopters left, I heard the sound of an explosion. After ten other minutes, I heard the sound of a second explosion and then the roar of a warplane. Half an hour later, there was a third blast, in which sound came from the direction of the oil facilities. The blast spread terror across the area."

Additionally, STJ interviewed Khalil Ahmad Hassan, a local from Kêl Hesnak/Tal Hasnat village. He narrated:

"On 23 November, around noon, a Turkish drone bombarded the Zarba facilities. [The shockwave] threw us to the ground. Nearly half an hour later, the drone attacked the Saida facilities first and then the Odeh oil facilities. It finally hit the Suwaidiyah gas facilities. The attack set all these stations on fire and rendered them out of service."

Notably, the Turkish strikes did not only target the main oil facility. The shelling also impacted five affiliated structures. For a comment on these attacks, STJ reached out to Adnan Ta'meh al-Hamadah (39), who works as a guard at Site 321 of the Odeh facilities. He narrated:

"The largest oil gathering station, at site 321, was targeted on 22 November. We remain unsure whether it was bombarded with a missile or a mortar shell. Later, other sites near Leilan village, south of the international highway, were hit. Half an hour later, site 003, affiliated with the Odeh oil field at the eastern entrance to al-Qahtaniyah/Terbasbiyah city, was also targeted. These attacks were followed by three strikes on affiliated sites, 146, 190, 174 and the Saida oil field."

Al-Hamadah added:

"I was not at site 321 when it was bombarded. However, I witnessed the Turkish shelling on site 146 of the Odeh oil field. The shelling of gas and oil stations and fields caused the service conditions of the locals to deteriorate. People are denied access to electricity and gas. Children and old people will suffer the most due to this, especially since winter is around the corner."





A [video](#) from a surveillance camera installed on a checkpoint of the Internal Security Forces (Asayish) captured the onset of an attack on one of the sites affiliated with the Odeh oil field in the al-Qahtaniyah/Terbasbiyah area. STJ tracked the location of the attack and verified that it was site 321 of the Odeh field, located at the western entrance to Qahtaniyah city.

While investigating attacks on other oil facilities, STJ reached out to a worker in the Zarba oil facilities, located north of Mulla Abbas village in the countryside of al-Qahtaniyah/Terbasbiyah city. On the condition of his anonymity, the worker narrated:

"It has been nearly a year since I started working within the Rmelan oil field, which is affiliated with the Autonomous Administration. A colleague and I were working at a secondary Zarba facility at around 11:30 a.m. when workers of neighboring facilities contacted us, saying that the Turkish air force had bombarded the Odeh oil facility. They asked us to be careful because Zarba would likely be targeted as well."

The worker added:

"We finished measuring the pressure of the wells and the amount of oil pumped. Then, we went to the main Zarba facilities. As soon as we reached the facilities, a Turkish warplane bombed the structure. At that moment, my colleague and I were still on the motorcycle, and there were other workers inside the facility. We almost fainted. The bombing destroyed the oil terminals, uprooted the lightning conductor, and set fire to tanks. We were forced to leave the place and return to our homes."

North Press [quoted](#) the director of the Gas Investment Company in al-Hasakah fields of the Autonomous Administration, Agid Abdul Majid, while covering the strikes on the energy structures on 25 November. The director said that: "Three shells exploded inside the gas plant, causing great damage... A fourth shell also exploded in the second facility of Suwaidiyah field, causing major destruction to the tanks and separators, and a large fire, which the fire brigade subsequently managed to control."

STJ reached out to Agid Abdul Majid for a detailed account on the status of the targeted facilities. He said:

"The Suwaidiyah plant is the only facility that extracts gas accompanying oil. This vital facility produces 40 to 50 MW of electricity, approximately 500 M3 of clean gas, which powers the electric turbines, and 130 tons of domestic gas, which fill 13,000 gas cylinders. The facility covered the needs of the entire population, nearly 4 million people, in northern and eastern Syria. However, on 23 November, the plant was hit with six warplane missiles and was rendered inoperable. Turkish airstrikes damaged the plant's main circuits, including the drying and cooling circuits. It thus stopped the production of gas and electricity. Due to the damage, we are currently supplying the turbines with untreated gas to resolve the power issues. However, it remains difficult to produce domestic gas due to the massive damage to the two circuits, lack of spare parts, and staff shortages. It would take time, effort, and vast resources to restore this facility to an operable state."

The Turkish air force targeted other oil sites, including the Tigris field, south of al-Jawadiyah/Çil Axa, the Ma'shouq village facility, and the Kêl Hesnak/Tal Hasnat facility, located in al-Jawadiyah/Çil Axa, in addition to the gas plant Ala Qous/Mushairfa, in the countryside of al-Qahtaniyah/Terbasbiyah city.





Additional Losses

The Turkish airstrikes destroyed other facilities, including grain silos and schools in the region. One of the strikes hit the Dahr al-Arab maize silos in the countryside of al-Dirbasiyah. Officials in the Autonomous Administration [estimated](#) the losses at about 150,000 USD.



Image (15)- The damage inflicted upon the Dahr al-Arab silos in the countryside of al-Dirbasiyah by the Turkish airstrikes. Credit: [al-Hasakah al-Hadath](#) Facebook page.



Image (16)- Drone footage of the attack published by the Turkish military ([source](#)).





Image (17)- The photo marks out elements from the two images listed above, matched with satellite footage. ([Location](#)).

Additionally, the Turkish military bombarded Kouran village, in the Kobanî/Ayn al-Arab city's eastern suburbs, with heavy artillery on 23 November. The shelling completely destroyed the village's only [school](#) and forced locals to flee their homes.

In the suburbs of Kobanî/Ayn al-Arab, Turkish airstrikes damaged a [dispensary in Qarmough village](#) and a [cell tower in Jishan village](#).

Moreover, several mortar shells landed near the Jerkin prison west of Qamishli/Qamishlo city. The Autonomous Administration has been using the prison to detain hundreds of Islamic State (IS) militants since last February, following IS's attack on the al-Sina'a prison in al-Hasakah city.

Notably, the hostilities forced families in the area to flee their homes. Locals from the Yazidi village of Tal Khatoun, in Qahtaniyah/Terbasbiyah city, told STJ that, like the residents of the nearby Otelce village, most families escaped when combat escalated while others opted to relocate women and children to safer areas at night before allowing them to return home in the morning.

On 24 November, the Media Center of the SDF [reported](#) that: "Yesterday, Wednesday, Turkish warplanes targeted the [SDF] positions assigned to protect the Hol camp... The Turkish airstrikes killed all eight [SDF] members charged with guarding the camp."

For a commentary on the humanitarian situation in the aftermath of the attacks, STJ reached out to a relief worker, operating in the Hol Camp. The worker said that the Turkish operation forced several relief organizations to suspend their activities for days.





Notably, the attacks took a toll on civilians and militants in the region. According to figures published by the SDF-affiliated platforms and local media outlets, Turkish hostilities killed nearly 15 civilians and injured 29 others over the first six days of the operation.

Additionally, the outlets recorded Turkish attacks on 18 military posts operated by Syrian government forces, established across the Syria-Turkey border. These attacks killed 15 soldiers and injured 16 others.

The operation also killed 18 SDF fighters and injured 24 others.

Potential Violations of International Law

The duty to distinguish between [civilians and combatants](#) and between [civilian objects and military objectives](#) during armed conflict, which is considered of a customary nature, stems from the rule established by the Saint Petersburg [Declaration](#) of 1868. The rule prescribes that attacks during armed conflict should aim solely to weaken the fighting ability of enemy armed forces. Therefore, attacks must only be directed at targets that meet the criteria for a military objective as defined in [Article 52\(2\) of Additional Protocol I](#). The [rule](#) is a customary rule and states:

“In so far as objects are concerned, military objectives are limited to those objects which by their nature, location, purpose or use make an effective contribution to military action and whose partial or total destruction, capture or neutralization, in the circumstances ruling at the time, offers a definite military advantage.”

If the target fails to meet simultaneously the two elements defining a military target, the attack on the target becomes an illegal act under international humanitarian law. Additionally, should the attack on the target be deliberate, it may amount to a war crime in accordance with the provisions of international criminal law. The requirement that these two elements be fulfilled together functions to prevent the parties in the conflict from directly transforming any civilian object into a legitimate military target, based only on the claim that the object contributes for any reason to military performance. This logic must be prevented because, if not prevented, it would proceed to give the parties in the conflict the authority to consider any object or person, for various considerations, as contributors to the military performance of an enemy, thus warranting an attack at random.

Moreover, the principle of distinction, according to this logic and these conditions, draws strict limits when it comes to objects of dual-use—those that are civilian but can be used or benefited from in certain circumstances for military purposes. These usually include objects related to infrastructure, food, water, or energy. Turkey might easily claim the oil sites, for instance, contribute effectively to the military capacity of the SDF, and this is the reason they were targeted. However, and this applies to any of the attacks documented on other objects in the report, this pretext should not be taken as evidence of the legitimacy of the attack. Therefore, it is essential to answer the following questions:

- How effective is the contribution these objects have made to the military capability of Turkey's enemy during hostilities (actual combat)?
- At the same time, and compared to this effectiveness, what military advantage do the Turkish forces reap by attacking and destroying these objects?



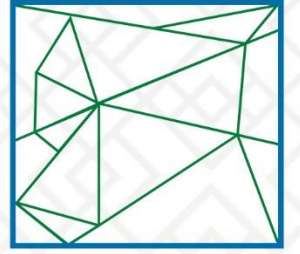


Considering the objects in the report, the answer to these two questions becomes more urgent given the nature of these civilian objects, and the extent of the impact attacks on them have on the lives of civilians compared to any alleged military advantage. Thus, Turkey, as the attacking party, must abide by the binding customary rule of [proportionality](#) when attacking. International humanitarian law prohibits military attacks that are believed to cause disproportionate harm to the civilian population. In making this assessment before launching an attack, parties in the conflict must consider the immediate and long-term damage to civilian life. The greater and more persistent the impact and damage, the lower the priority of the military objective, if the concept of the military objective applies in the first place.

Moreover, not only does Turkey have these obligations, but it is also under an obligation not to deprive, directly or indirectly, the civilian population of [objects indispensable to its survival](#). Notably, there is no fixed list that defines these objects because concerned objects differ according to the context. When we consider the economic crisis, the closure of humanitarian crossings, and the epidemiological situation, among other factors, several objects become essential and indispensable for the life of the civilian population, including energy-related objects, which may affect not only electricity but also water and health services. The same applies to grain silos and other food facilities.

Notably, the aspect of deliberation is evident in the Turkish attacks on civilian objects and the unjustified harm caused to civilians. Targeting a power station four times at specific intervals leaves no room for doubt about the intention to cause such damage because it is known that after the first attack, ambulance crews, civilians, and others will go to the site to inspect the losses and contribute to the rescue efforts.





About Us:

Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ) is a nonprofit, nongovernmental organization monitoring human rights violations in Syria. Founded in 2015, STJ has been based in France since 2019.

STJ is an impartial and independent Syrian human rights organization operating across Syria. Our network of field researchers monitor and report human rights violations occurring on the ground in Syria, while our international team of human rights experts, lawyers, and journalists gather evidence, examine emerging patterns of violations, and analyze how violations break domestic Syrian and international law.

We are committed to documenting violations of human rights committed by all parties in the Syrian conflict and elevating the voices of all Syrians victimized by human rights violations, regardless of their ethnicity, religion, political affiliation, class, and/or gender. Our commitment to human rights monitoring is founded on the idea that professional human rights documentation meeting international standards is the first step to uncovering the truth and achieving justice in Syria.



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