

# “As If an Earthquake Had Struck”: Turkish Airstrikes Are Killing Life in Northeast Syria



## **“As If an Earthquake Had Struck”: Turkish Airstrikes Are Killing Life in Northeast Syria**

*The Turkish airstrikes in the region amount to attacks on objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population in violation of international humanitarian law*

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## Executive Summary

Over the last quarter of 2023 and January 2024, the Turkish Armed Forces launched three air campaigns into northeast Syria, targeting critical civilian infrastructure across the region. The region is known for the diversity of its population, as it is home to Kurds, Arabs, and Assyrians, among other ethnic and religious communities.

The first campaign started on 5 October 2023 and lasted for five days. Türkiye launched nearly **90** airstrikes against over **150** critical sites, using drones and warplanes. The attacks rendered power transfer stations out of service, depriving people in the affected areas of electricity and water for weeks. The raids also hit energy facilities, including gas and oil fields. The airstrikes killed at least **48** people, including **11** civilians, and injured at least **47** others, including **15** civilians.

The airstrikes caused a rapid mass displacement from the target areas and their surroundings. People sought the suburbs, fearing for their lives. The airstrikes also acted as a catalyst for migration, prompting a significant portion of the region's population to consider leaving Syria in search of safety. This decision was further fuelled by the deteriorating living conditions, which worsened even further after the raids. Several of the report's sources said children in affected areas developed health conditions, including urinary incontinence, after the bombing.

In matching statements, several of the report's sources, including eyewitnesses from targeted energy facilities, also stressed that the 2023 airstrikes were larger in scale and more destructive than those the region witnessed in 2022. The airstrikes decimated numerous facilities in a blatant violation of international humanitarian law.

On 25 December 2023, Türkiye launched its second extensive and large-scale air campaign in the region, again using drones and warplanes. On 26 December 2023, the Turkish Intelligence Service (MİT)—headed by İbrahim Kalın—announced the toll of the attacks, revealing that they destroyed nearly **50** facilities in various cities across the region, including Qamishli/Qamishlo, Amuda, and Ayn al-Arab/Kobani. These airstrikes targeted several healthcare facilities, killed at least **nine** civilians, and injured at least **18** others.

During this campaign, which consistently targeted civilian infrastructure, the Turkish aircraft again attacked the Auda oil field, among other energy facilities, while the bulk of the strikes focused on structures, such as food factories, industrial sites, warehouses, and healthcare centers. Two medical centers sustained damage and had to halt their activities entirely. The airstrikes also targeted the outskirts of a camp for internally displaced people (IDPs) in al-Hasakah city, forcing several humanitarian organizations active at the camp to suspend their operations.

In January 2024, Türkiye launched its third intensive air campaign, which continued from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month. Warplanes and drones targeted at least **64** locations in different areas across the region. The aircraft bombed most of the region's critical civilian infrastructure, including the Suwaydiyah gas and power plant and sites at the Auda oil field, all of which had suffered complete or partial destruction in the previous two campaigns. This time, the aircraft rendered the attacked facilities out of operation. The airstrikes injured **six** civilians, including two children.

## Legal Opinion and Recommendations

International humanitarian law (IHL) does not provide a direct definition of "civilian infrastructure." However, its provisions and rules, which are binding at all times and circumstances, enable all parties in a conflict to identify these structures. The most important of these provisions—which take on the character of customary rules in international law—are the distinction between civilian objects and military objectives; the prohibition of indiscriminate attacks; proportionality and precaution in attacks; and the prohibition of attacks against objects that are indispensable for the survival of the civilian population. The duty to constantly distinguish between civilian objects and military objectives when conducting military operations is considered a "cornerstone" of IHL because it reflects its main goal, which is to protect civilians and civilian objects. Without a doubt, all infrastructure-classified facilities are fundamentally civilian objects that require protection from direct attack. These objects are "the physical and organizational structures and facilities that support the daily life of a civilian population and are critical for a functioning society. Civilian infrastructure can include transportation networks; utilities; healthcare facilities; educational institutions; housing and residential areas; communication systems; [and] public services."<sup>1</sup>

The practical basis for parties to the conflict to apply the principle of distinction is that any object is considered civilian, and attacking it is prohibited as long as it does not meet the two criteria that define a military objective: it has to effectively contribute, by virtue of its nature; location; purpose; or use, to the military action—that is, the object plays a significant and direct role in military operations, enhancing the military capabilities or objectives of one of the parties to the conflict—and its total or partial destruction; capture; or neutralization must offer a definite military advantage to the attacking party in the circumstances ruling at the time.<sup>2</sup> Each object must be assessed individually. The attacking party must not merely assume that an object, itself or others that resemble it, is contributing to the military action of an adversary and thus confer on themselves an immediate and inherent right to attack it. Perhaps the statement made by the representatives of the Turkish State embodies such an assumption. The statement does not classify the listed objects based on their compliance with the two criteria of a legitimate military target, but rather on the basis of mere "affiliation" to the adversary. If the attacking party is certain that the object it intends to attack "contributes effectively to the military action of the adversary," it must demonstrate that the attack's military advantage is "direct and specific," meaning it must be substantial and relatively close; transpires within the period during which the object fulfills a military purpose; and not be a hardly perceptible or would only appear in the long term.<sup>3</sup> Claiming that any object is a legitimate target just because of its field or administrative affiliation with the adversary renders the principle of distinction void and violates IHL's essence and purpose. This is because, by analogy, any party to the conflict can treat all objects located in the opponent's territories of control as legitimate targets.

Under IHL, for an infrastructure facility to be considered a legitimate military target in such a way that it loses the protection granted to it as a civilian object, the attacking party must prove with certainty that: first, the facility in question is being used for military purposes; second, attacking it will achieve a direct and specific military advantage during that use. The lack of

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<sup>1</sup> "Protection of Civilian Infrastructure in Armed Conflict", Diakonia International Humanitarian Law Center, 8 December 2023 (last visited: 11 June 2024), p.4. <https://www.diakonia.se/ihl/news/protection-of-civilian-infrastructure-in-armed-conflict/>

<sup>2</sup> Protocol II Additional to Geneva Conventions, Article 52 (2).

<sup>3</sup> ICRC, Commentary on the Protocol additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949, para. 2209.



information confirming these two conditions casts doubt as to whether this object is dedicated for civilian purposes or is being used to make an effective contribution to military action. Therefore, the attacking party must assume that this object is not being used for such a contribution and refrain from attacking it.<sup>4</sup> Should there be verified information that certain civilian infrastructure possesses "dual-use" functionality, serving both civilian and military purposes, that attacking party remains obligated to comply with the principle of distinction, which entails the fulfilment of the interconnected elements of the definition of military objective, as well as the principles of proportionality and precaution.

In this context, if we assume the attacks on power plants and transfer stations, as well as the oil fields reported herein, were carried out considering that these infrastructures are of dual-use and in accordance with the principle of distinction, this in itself does not automatically establish the legitimacy of the attacks. The principle of proportionality necessitates that the attacking party carefully consider the potential long-term impact of such an attack on the provision of essential services to the civilian population. This includes, as the report demonstrates, healthcare, access to clean water, and other basic needs essential for the civilian population's survival and well-being under the conditions in place at the time of the attack. The existing contextual conditions in areas affected by the attacks confirm that the harm that will be caused to civilians is excessive compared to the direct and substantial military advantage of each attack,<sup>5</sup> especially in light of the water crisis; the complexities of humanitarian access; economic distress; and limited healthcare services. Therefore, attacks that do not meet the principle of proportionality in this particular context may also amount to a violation of the prohibition against depriving civilians of objects that are essential for their survival. When making the proportionality assessment, parties to the conflict must consider not only the immediate harm that may arise from the attack, but also the potential reverberating or long-term harm that could befall the civilian population. This comprehensive evaluation takes into account the target's specific context and circumstances. For example, considering the airstrikes documented here, neither the number of residents who rely almost entirely on the basic services provided by the targeted infrastructure nor the lack of viable alternatives can be overlooked. This is not to mention the high cost and time required for rehabilitation, while civilians are left without access to those basic needs necessary for their survival.

After verifying the military objective status of a civilian infrastructure object and ensuring compliance with the proportionality requirements, the attacking party must simultaneously take all feasible precautions to prevent or minimise harm to civilians or civilian objects during attacks. The long-term dimensions of proportionality requirements dictate that precautionary measures must consider various factors such as the location of the object; the type and timing of the attack; its precise location; and the weapon of choice. Furthermore, an in-advance declaration that all infrastructure facilities are legitimate targets also violates the duty to exercise "constant care," which requires that parties to the conflict maintain an ongoing assessment of the situation and continuously adapt their military operations to prevent or minimize harm to civilians and civilian objects. This implies that the parties to the conflict are not only required to take precautions during the planning and execution of individual attacks, but also in their broader military strategy and tactics.

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<sup>4</sup> ICRC, Customary IHL Study, Rule 10; Additional Protocol I, Article 52(3).

<sup>5</sup> Additional Protocol I, Articles 51(5)(b); ICRC Customary IHL Study, Rule 14.

Moreover, IHL provides special protection rules and measures for vital infrastructure, including those that incur disproportionate damage. This protection extends to incidents documented herein, especially those involving healthcare units;<sup>6</sup> objects and materials indispensable to the survival of the civilian population;<sup>7</sup> and the natural environment.<sup>8</sup> The special protection granted to these objects requires the parties to the conflict to take additional measures to protect them from and during attack. It also raises the threshold required for the principles of distinction, proportionality, and precaution. In addition to being safeguarded from any form of attack, destruction, or requisition in all circumstances,<sup>9</sup> this special protection is not automatically forfeited if they are used in activities that deviate from their humanitarian mission and may cause harm to the opponent. Protection endures unless a due and reasonable warning has been issued and the warning remains unheeded.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, given the contextual circumstances addressed herein, several infrastructures—such as the dialysis center, oxygen production unit, and power plants—qualify as vital facilities indispensable to the survival of the civilian population. Targeting these facilities or causing them catastrophic harm remains unjustifiable, as it is expected “to leave the civilian population with such inadequate food or water as to cause its starvation or force its movement.”<sup>11</sup> Identifying the infrastructure necessary for the civilian population's survival is context-specific. This means that destroying or disabling a power station that has no alternative and on which thousands of civilians, including IDPs, depend amounts to depriving this population of the means of survival, which is prohibited by IHL in all circumstances.<sup>12</sup>

It is of utmost importance to not exploit the protection granted to civilian infrastructure by placing military objectives or launching attacks in the vicinity of these objects, which are actions expressly prohibited under IHL. The IHL does not specifically prohibit the use of civilian objects for military purposes. Nevertheless, it imposes on parties engaged in armed conflicts the duty to protect civilians and civilian objects under their control from the adverse effects of attacks.<sup>13</sup> Objects granted special protection, including hospitals and other vital infrastructure, should always be protected from risks arising from military operations, primarily by refraining from using them for military purposes.

## Recommendations

- **The United Nations and Security Council** must condemn the breaches of IHL posed by the repeated Turkish airstrikes in northeast Syria. They must also step up international de-escalation mediation to establish a ceasefire in the region so as to protect civilians and safeguard their fundamental rights.
- **The United States and U.S.-led Coalition** must renegotiate the terms of the ceasefire signed with Türkiye so as to include airstrikes; close the airspace to drones and military

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<sup>6</sup> Additional Protocol I, Article 12; ICRC, Customary IHL Study, Rule 28.

<sup>7</sup> Additional Protocol I, Article 54; Additional Protocol II, Article 14; ICRC, Customary IHL Study, Rule 54.

<sup>8</sup> Additional Protocol I, Article 55; ICRC, Customary IHL Study, Rules 43-45.

<sup>9</sup> Geneva Convention I, Articles 19-23 and 33-35; Geneva Convention IV, Article 18; Additional Protocol I, Articles 8 and 12-14; Additional Protocol II, Article 11.

<sup>10</sup> Geneva Convention I, Article 21; Additional Protocol I, Article 13; Additional Protocol II, Article 11; ICRC, Customary IHL Study, Rule 28.

<sup>11</sup> Additional Protocol I, Article 54 (3)(b).

<sup>12</sup> For additional information, see: “Protection of Civilian Infrastructure in Armed Conflict”, Diakonia International Humanitarian Law Center, 8 December 2023 (last visited: 11 June 2024). <https://www.diakonia.se/ihl/news/protection-of-civilian-infrastructure-in-armed-conflict/>

<sup>13</sup> Additional Protocol I, Articles 58(c); ICRC, Customary IHL Study, Rules 22-24.

aircraft targeting infrastructure, civilian objects, and populated areas; and have a clear stance against the airstrikes, which are undermining stability and the fight against the Islamic State (IS, also known as Daesh) in the region.

- **The International Community** must dedicate resources to rebuilding destroyed civilian infrastructure, including electricity and energy facilities, and adapt them so as to be resilient to potential future airstrikes. They must also reserve resources to support humanitarian organizations active in the region to help them meet the needs of communities in affected areas, as well as rights groups documenting the violations that occurred during the three air campaigns, including the temporary mass displacements.
- **Concerned Parties** must impose sanctions and hold accountable Turkish officials involved in the bombing of civilian infrastructure in the region. They also must impose sanctions on Turkish individuals and companies, as well as agents, who are involved in the procurement of critical components Türkiye needs for its drone and aircraft programs.
- **Concerned Parties** must press foreign producers and supply networks, which provide Türkiye with equipment and components for its drone and aircraft programs, to observe the principle of due diligence to ensure Türkiye is not using their products in airstrikes that could result in massive human rights violations and IHL breaches.

## Methodology

For this report, Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ) conducted extensive research between October 2023 and March 2024. The investigation process included the collection of **21** testimonies by field researchers in northeast Syria who met with victims, relatives of victims, survivors, and eyewitnesses to the Turkish airstrikes.

Among the eyewitnesses are workers within the energy facilities targeted in the cities of Qamishli/Qamishlo and Amuda and al-Qahtaniyah/Tirbespi town, as well as administrative staff members at the region's water and electricity departments, who described the extent of damage at the affected facilities and the impact the attacks had on the lives of civilians.

The interviews were carried out in Arabic and Kurdish. **One** interview was conducted online over secure messaging applications. The remaining **20** interviews were conducted in person in locations deemed safe and private by researchers and the interviewed people. Notably, several sources and witnesses were met twice. They provided input on the third air campaign, during which the Turkish airstrikes targeted facilities they had hit and partially damaged during the first campaign.

The field researchers obtained the interviewees' informed consent. They clarified to all sources and witnesses the intended use of the information, including the development and publication of this report, and emphasized the potential risks involved. Therefore, the majority of the interviewees requested anonymity and the removal of all identifying details, fearing reprisals against themselves or relatives from Türkiye or its affiliated Syrian armed groups.

Additionally, STJ reviewed videos and images that were available online or exclusively provided by witnesses and sources. Several visuals were included in the report after thorough verification. STJ also reviewed multiple reports published by the media and other rights groups that monitored and documented the three Turkish air campaigns, citing a number in this report.



## Background

On 4 October 2023, Hakan Fidan, Türkiye's Foreign Minister and previously the director of the National Intelligence Organization (MİT), [stated](#) that "[f]rom now on, all infrastructure, superstructure, and energy facilities of the PKK and YPG, especially in Iraq and Syria, are the legitimate targets of our security forces, armed forces, and intelligence units," referring to the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and the People's Protection Units (YPG) of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) by their Kurdish acronyms. Türkiye classifies the PPK as a terrorist group and considers the SDF, primarily the YPG, to be its offshoot in Syria.

Following this statement, Türkiye launched three extensive air campaigns in areas controlled by the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES). According to Türkiye, the first campaign was in response to the ["terrorist attack"](#) near the parliament in Ankara on 1 October 2023, for which the PKK claimed responsibility.

Türkiye's reprisals for the attack targeted vital infrastructure and energy facilities in northeast Syria, even though Mazloum Abdi, General Commander of the SDF, denied allegations of involvement in the Ankara attack on X. He [said](#), "Ankara's attack perpetrators haven't passed through our region as Turkish officials claim, and we aren't party to Turkey's internal conflict, nor do we encourage escalation," adding that "Turkey is looking for pretexts to legitimize its ongoing attacks on our region and to launch a new military aggression that is of our deep concern."

In a [report](#) documenting the impact of the intense airstrikes in northeast Syria, Adam Coogle, deputy Middle East director at Human Rights Watch, stressed that "[b]y targeting critical infrastructure across northeast Syria, including power and water stations, Turkey has flouted its responsibility to ensure that its military actions do not aggravate the region's already dire humanitarian crisis." He added that "people in al-Hasakeh city and its surroundings, already facing a severe water crisis for the past four years, must now also bear the brunt of increased bombardment and destruction, exacerbating their struggle to get essential water supplies."

In a joint [statement](#), 151 Syrian civil society organizations also strongly condemned "targeting populated areas, power plants, oil facilities and critical infrastructure indispensable to the survival of civilians" and cautioned "the international community that these attacks will definitely exacerbate the ongoing existing humanitarian crisis and will greatly affect the region's population with its diverse components."

Notably, the campaigns Türkiye started in October 2023 are an extension of the [attack](#) it launched in northeast Syria in 2022 using drones and warplanes. The 2022 airstrikes also injured and killed civilians, including a [journalist](#); destroyed oil infrastructure and terminals; and rendered several other energy facilities in the region inoperable.

Furthermore, the airstrikes mark an escalation of the Turkish drone war against northeast Syria. The [drone attacks](#) killed at least 83 people and injured at least 55 others between 2021 and the first third of August 2023.

In its March 2024 [report](#), the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic (COI) said, "The 5 October attacks on electricity infrastructure disrupted the provision of electricity to water pumping stations, depriving civilians of access to water. Such acts amount to attacks on objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population in violation of international humanitarian law, as well as direct attacks against civilian objects, which may amount to war crimes."

## The Air Campaign in October 2023

On 5 October 2023, the Turkish Air Force began an intense five-day aerial campaign that targeted over **150** locations across northeast Syria. The Rojava Information Center (RIC) [estimated](#) the number of attacks at **89** raids, out of which **25** were carried out by warplanes and **64** by drones.

The airstrikes killed at least **48** people, [including 11 civilians](#), and injured at least **47** others, including **15** civilians. A large number of the casualties were members of the Internal Security Forces (Asayish), who died in a [raid](#) on a training center for the Anti-Drug Unit near al-Malikiyah/Dêrik city. The raid killed **29** and wounded another **28** of the center's trainees.

The strikes targeted service infrastructure, mostly power transfer stations in Amuda and Qamishli/Qamishlo cities. This [cut off](#) electricity and water for northeast Syria, home to nearly 4.3 million people. The raids also targeted the energy infrastructure, including facilities in the Auda, Remailan, and Gerdahol oil fields, and the Suwaydiyah gas station.

### Key Targeted Power Stations

The October Turkish airstrikes paralyzed water and electricity services in the affected areas. The raids caused damage to nearly all the region's power transfer stations, which in turn disrupted electricity supplies to several water pumping stations and thus rendered them out of operation.

Delineating the scope of the airstrikes, Mustafa Suleiman,<sup>14</sup> Head of the Energy and Distribution Directorate in the Jazira Region, said the attacks left six electricity transfer stations inoperable. Two of the hit stations, adjacent to each other and located within [the al-Shamaliya station](#), were in Qamishli/Qamishlo city, two in al-Qahtaniyah/Tirbespi town, one in Amuda city, and one in al-Hasakah at the dam west of the city (locally known as [the al-Sad al-Gharbi station](#)).

Mustafa also described the pattern underlying the attacks and the damage at the targeted facilities:

"The attack on a power transfer station not only targets the main transfer unit but also the unit's other components, such as transformers, circuit breakers, and cables... I want to emphasize that the bombing completely destroyed all the targeted stations."

To supply electricity to the affected cities and towns, the Energy and Distribution Directorate replaced the damaged transformers with spares from storage in locations that were not attacked. However, the new transformers were bombed and destroyed during the third air campaign in January 2024.

On 5 October 2023, a Turkish drone [targeted](#) a power transfer station in Amuda city, near Qamishli/Qamishlo city. The airstrike "destroyed the primary transfer unit, rendered it inoperable, and inflicted substantial damage to the transmission network and cables," according to Saud Ali,<sup>15</sup> Co-Director of the Amuda Electricity Department.

Saud emphasized that the station's destruction disrupted electricity supplies to the entire city and its suburbs for two weeks until the department replaced the transformer. He added that

<sup>14</sup> The source was interviewed in person by STJ's field researcher on 23 March 2024.

<sup>15</sup> The source was interviewed in person by STJ's field researcher on 2 December 2023.

the electricity cuts also deprived the area's residents of water, highlighting that the city's blood center, hospitals, and flour mills bore the brunt of the water shortage. According to Saud:

"There are neither military centers nor posts in the station's vicinity. There is only an Asayish checkpoint nearby, at the southern entrance to the city."

Saud said that the impact of the attacks went beyond Amuda city, as the electricity and water cuts also affected residents in al-Hasakah city and its suburbs. This is because "the Amuda power station transfers electricity to the al-Darbasiyah city's transfer station, which in turn operates the Alok [water pumping] station in Ras al-Ayn/Serê Kaniyê, controlled by the armed opposition groups. Alok station provides drinking water to al-Hasakah city and its countryside."

[Alok water pumping station](#), located east of the city of Ras al-Ayn/Sari Kani, is the [main source](#) of drinkable water for around 600,000 people in northern Syria, specifically in the city of [al-Hasakah](#) and the town of [Tall Tamr](#) and their suburbs, which have the makeshift camps of [al-Hawl](#), [al-Areesha \(or al-Sadd\)](#) and [Washo Kani \(or al-Twaina\)](#), which host tens of thousands of Syrians, Iraqis, and foreigners who lived in areas formerly held by the Islamic State (IS, also known as Daesh).

Notably, over 35,000 people in Amuda city struggled with access to water because the targeted power transfer station is responsible for operating 16 wells, according to Ibrahim Mirzo,<sup>16</sup> an employee at the Amuda Water Department.

Ibrahim said the water crisis persisted for days because the water department could operate only seven wells that vary in depth and discharge pressure, using the only four diesel-fuelled power generators they had. He added:

"The [pumped] water was insufficient to cover the entire city, particularly since supplying water to some of Amuda's areas and neighborhoods necessitated a high flow rate. Therefore, we provided water to less than 60% of the city's population... A few people turned to residential wells and distributed [water] to their neighbors. They operated the wells using home power generators."

Ibrahim said the shelling had also triggered a water crisis in Amuda's countryside. The Turkish airstrikes left residents across 90 villages without any water supplies, as they mainly relied on the water line coming from Jager town, also affiliated with the city. The situation emerged because "the water line and the source feeding the [villages] struggled with the disrupted electricity. We thus could not pump water. Additionally, the groundwater in the area contains sulfur and is unsuitable for drinking or household use."

Five days after the disruption, the Amuda Water Department delivered water to a handful of thirst-stricken villages through private water tanks. However, the allocations remained below the villages' dire needs.

Image 1-Designed by STJ, the image below matches satellite footage of the Amuda power transfer station (geolocation: [37.082346, 40.930621](#)) with a screenshot (1) from a video of the station after the Turkish airstrike on 5 October 2023 (source: [ARTA](#)).

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<sup>16</sup> The source opted to use a pseudonym. He was interviewed in person by STJ's field researcher on 2 December 2023.



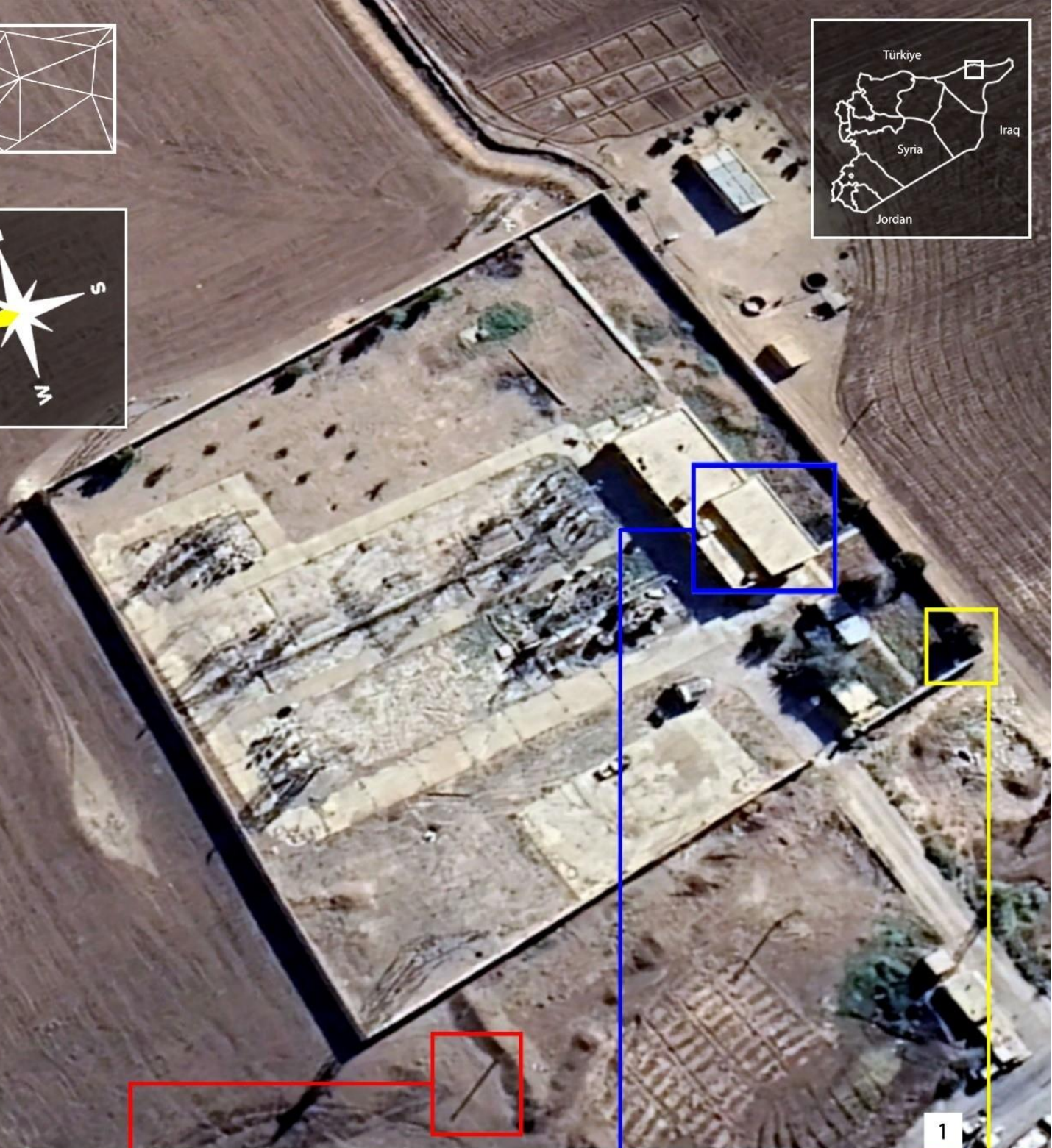
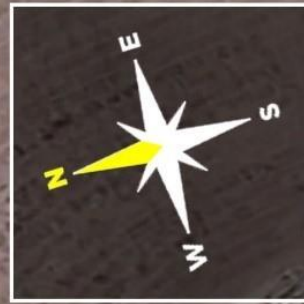






Image 2-Damage at the Amuda power transfer station caused by the Turkish airstrike on 5 October 2023. Source: [North Press Agency](#).

During the same campaign, the Turkish airstrikes targeted the power transfer station north of Qamishli/Qamishlo city twice and rendered it inoperable. There were two transformers within the station. The first was destroyed in an attack on 5 October, and the second in an airstrike the next day. Wahid al-Mousa,<sup>17</sup> one of the station's workers, said:

"Had the second transformer not been wrecked, the station could still have been operated after disconnecting the transformer [damaged the day before]. However, Türkiye appears to be well-informed about the contents of the Qamishli station."

Wahid noted that the damage incurred by the station and challenges that hampered repairs deprived around 60 percent of the population in Qamishli/Qamishlo city and its countryside of electricity for about ten days. Before the Turkish airstrike, the station provided the area with roughly three hours of electricity per day, assisting residents in coping with the prolonged outages that diesel-fuelled power generators could not remedy.

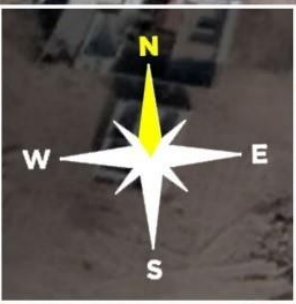
Like in Amuda, the electricity disruption after the airstrikes crippled the activities of several of the city's vital facilities, including the Heart and Eye Hospital, the Jazira flour mill, two auto-bakeries, and the pumps at water wells in al-Hilaliyah and al-'waijeh areas, among others.

Image 3- Designed by STJ, the image below matches satellite footage of the power transfer station north of Qamishli/Qamishlo city (geolocation: [37.072168, 41.242417](#)), a screenshot (1) from a video of the station after the Turkish airstrike on 5 October 2023 (source: [Alaraby TV](#)), and an image (2) of the damage at the station's transformer (source: STJ, shared by Wahid al-Mousa).

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<sup>17</sup> The source opted to use a pseudonym. He was first interviewed by STJ's field researcher in person on 7 October 2023.





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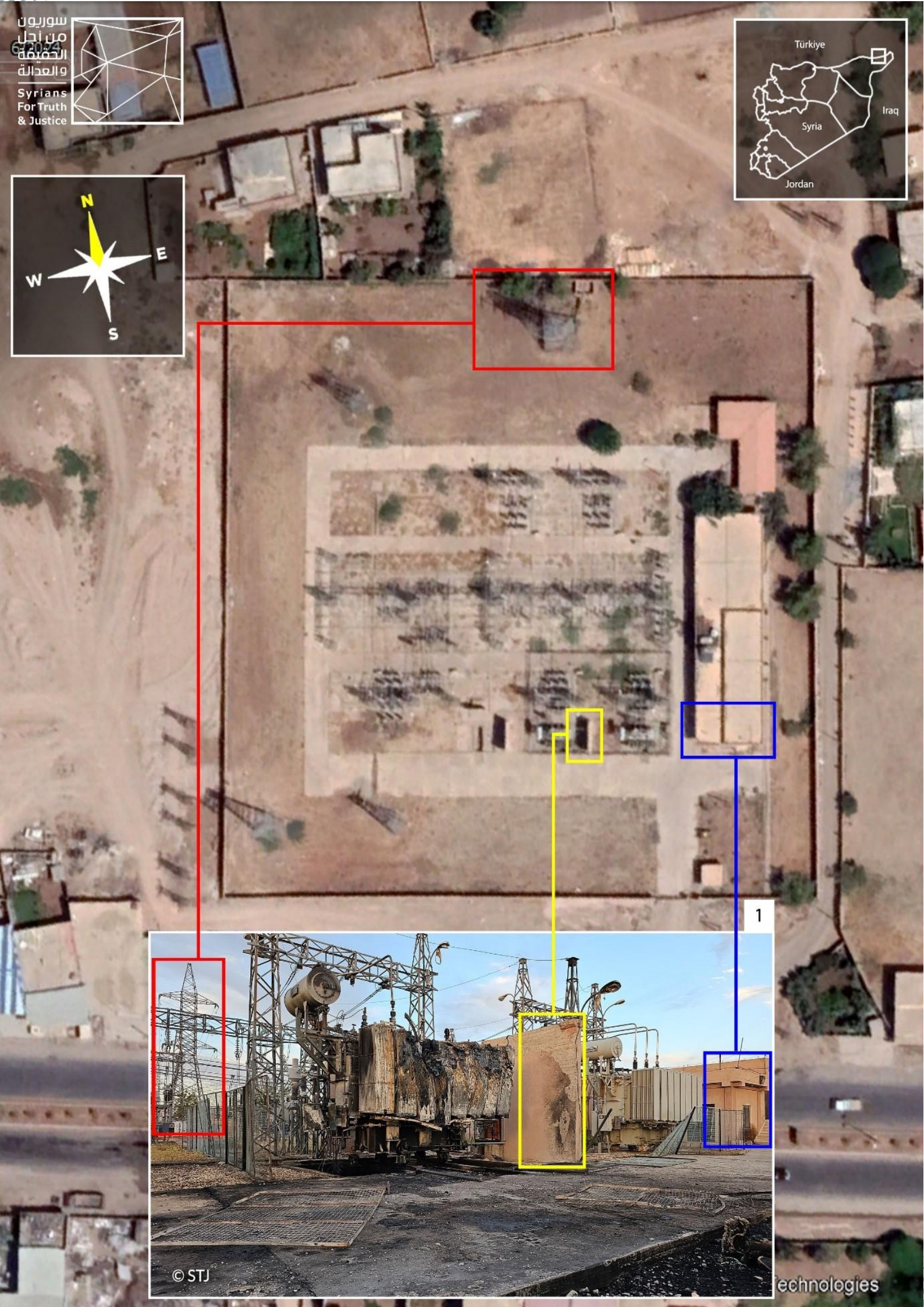




Image 4- Designed by STJ, the image above matches satellite footage of the power transfer station north of Qamishli/Qamishlo city (geolocation: [37.071389, 41.241667](#)), with photo (1) of the damage at the station's transformer (source: STJ, captured by photojournalist Ivan Hasib).

## Key Targeted Energy Facilities

On 5 October 2023, Turkish airstrikes targeted energy infrastructure in northeast Syria, including facilities in the Auda oil field surrounding al-Qahtaniyah/Tirbespi town and the major oil gathering stations in the suburbs of al-Jawadiyah/Cil Axa town and al-Malikiyah/Dêrik city, where the Suwaydiyah gas field is also located. Abdulaziz Muhammad,<sup>18</sup> an employee in the Auda oil field, said:

"Turkish aircraft targeted the Suwaydiyah gas field, stopping the gas turbines responsible for generating electricity at the Suwaydiyah power plant, on which the region depends."

The station [has seven turbines](#) that produce 1,500 to 1,600 megawatts of electricity per day and operate oil and gas wells in the al-Malikiyah/Dêrik city and its countryside.

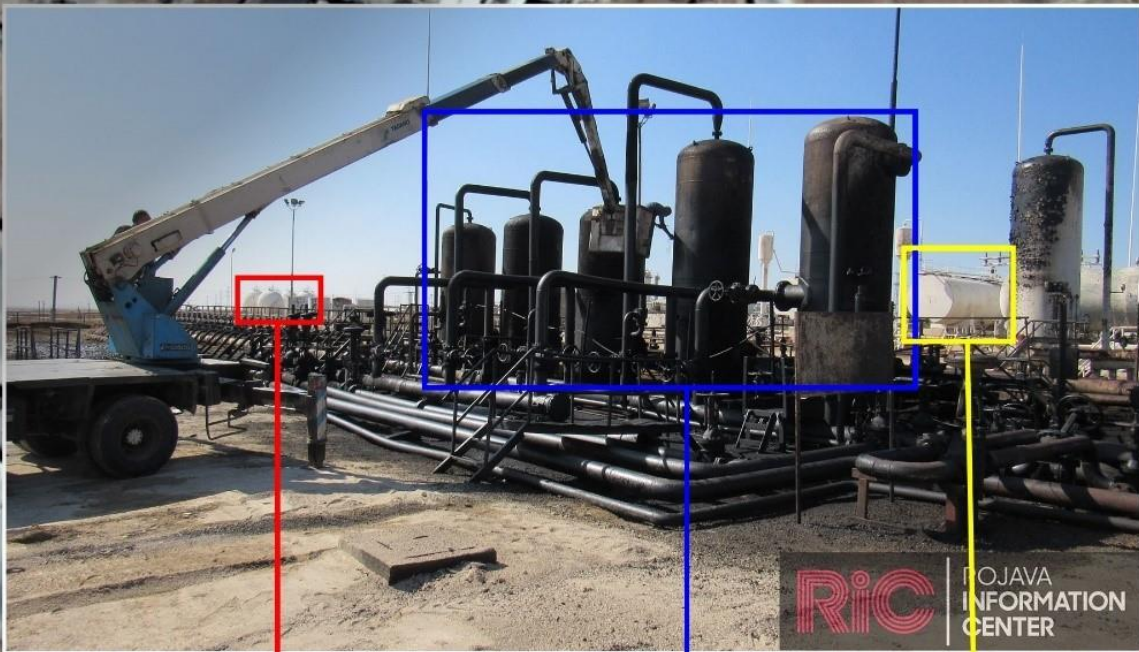
In a [comment](#) to North Press Agency, Agid Abdelmajid, director of the Gas Investment Company in al-Hasakah, said that after targeting the Suwaydiyah turbines, "the Turkish drones hit the only household gas plant and the gas plant that operates the turbines and the cooling system," due to which "the plant as a whole is now out of operation." He stressed that repairs would cost millions of dollars.



Image 5-Damage at the Suwaydiyah facilities in the countryside of al-Malikiyah/Dêrik city due to the Turkish strike on 5 October 2023. Source: [North Press Agency](#).

<sup>18</sup> The source was first interviewed by STJ's field researcher in person on 2 December 2023.





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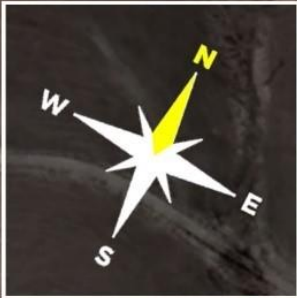




Image 6- Designed by STJ, the image above matches satellite footage of the Suwaydiyah power plant in the countryside of al-Malikiyah/Dêrik city (geolocation: [36.944456, 42.126309](#)) and a photo (1) of the damage at the plant caused by the Turkish airstrike on 5 October 2023 (source: [Rojava Information Center](#)).

In turn, Hassan al-Ali,<sup>19</sup> supervisor at six oil stations, including the Zarba station, near Mulla Abbas village in the northern countryside of al-Qahtaniyah/Tirbespi town, said a chain of airstrikes targeted four oil stations on 5 October 2023:

"The administration called me and said the Ala Qawsi/Mshairfeh station was hit, and I had to shut off all the oil wells. I still had not left my place when Zarba station was bombed. I stopped the wells that supply the station with oil and headed to the Zarba station... I turned off the valves that channel oil to the tanks at the station... I had not finished my work when they hit the Saida oil station, approximately four kilometers from the Zarba station. I rushed to [the Saida] station to perform the same procedure... The Babasi oil station came under attack in the evening of the same day. I believe a drone carried out the strike because the damage was minor. It was not as significant as that caused by a warplane."

Hassan noted that, in 2023, more than ten oil wells were shot at by the Turkish military due to their proximity to the border:

"For instance, the transformers at the oil well (Zraba-4 horizontal) and another referred to as (Zraba-56 horizontal) were shot at, damaged, and rendered unfunctional over three times. Each transformer costs between 4,000 and 5,000 USD."

Image 7- Designed by STJ, the image below matches satellite footage of the Zarba oil station near Mulla Abbas village in the northern countryside of al-Qahtaniyah/Tirbespi town (geolocation: [37.085398, 41.566994](#)), with photos 1 (source: [Photojournalist Delil Souliman's X account](#)) and 2 (source: STJ, captured by photojournalist Ivan Hasib) of the damage at the station caused by the Turkish airstrike on 5 October 2023.

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<sup>19</sup> The source was interviewed in person by STJ's field researcher on 17 February 2024.





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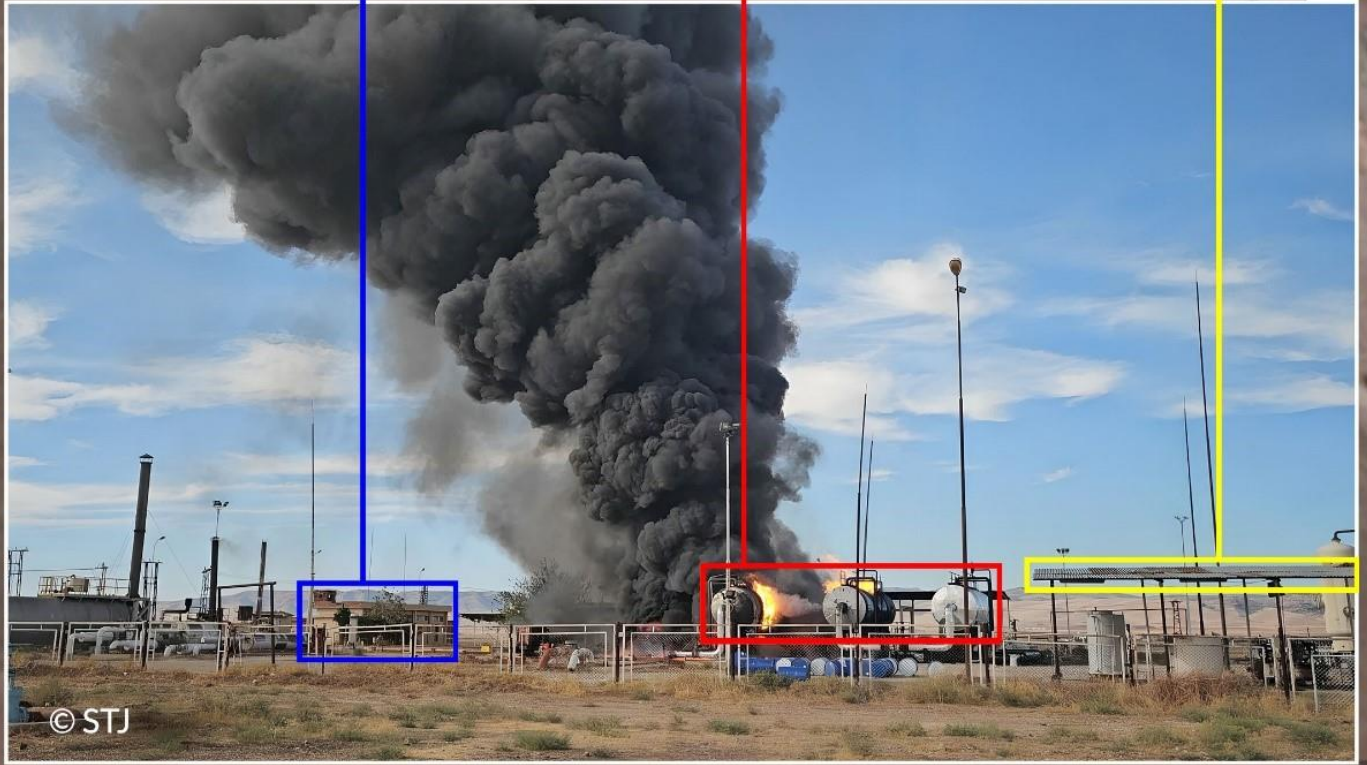
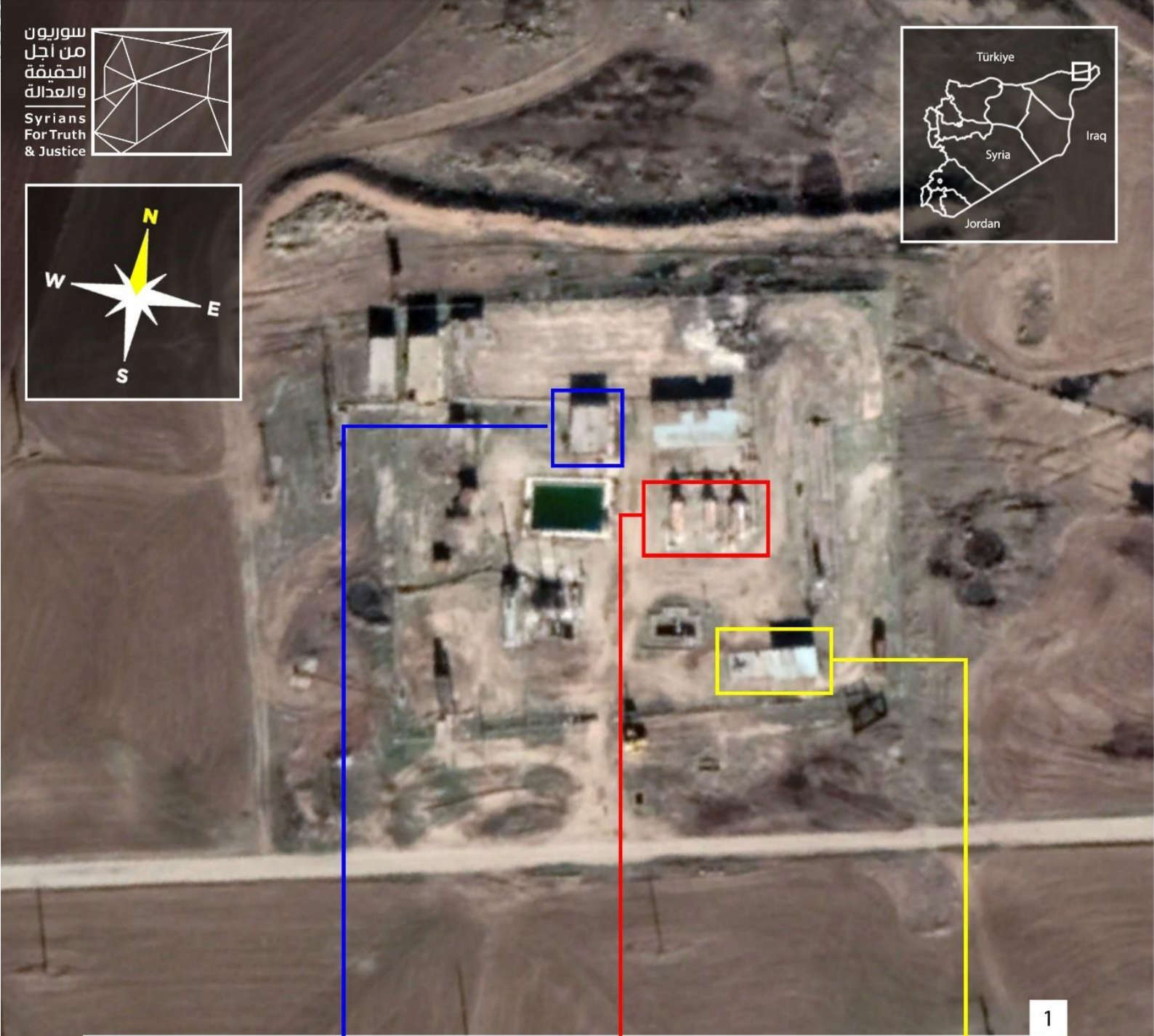




Image 8- Designed by STJ, the image above matches satellite footage of the Zarba oil station near Mulla Abbas village in the northern countryside of al-Qahtaniyah/Tirbespi town (geolocation: [37.085833, 41.566667](#)), with photo 1 of the damage at the station caused by the Turkish airstrike on 5 October 2023 (source: STJ, captured by photojournalist Ivan Hasib).

Sarmad Khalil,<sup>20</sup> a worker at Site 231 of the Auda oil field, described the extent of the destruction caused by the Turkish attacks on the field at the western entrance to Qahtaniyah/Tirbespi town on 5 October 2023:

"Unlike last year (2022), a warplane carried out the strike this time. The diameter of the craters left by the strike on the site ranged between eight and ten meters. The extent of damage to the site was 100%. The warplane bombing affected all the oil fields in the area... Last year (2022), damage from the bombing was limited to the oil tank. However, the site now stands destroyed."



Image 9- One of the craters caused by the Turkish airstrikes on the Auda oil field on 5 October 2023. Source: STJ, shared by Sarmad Khalil.

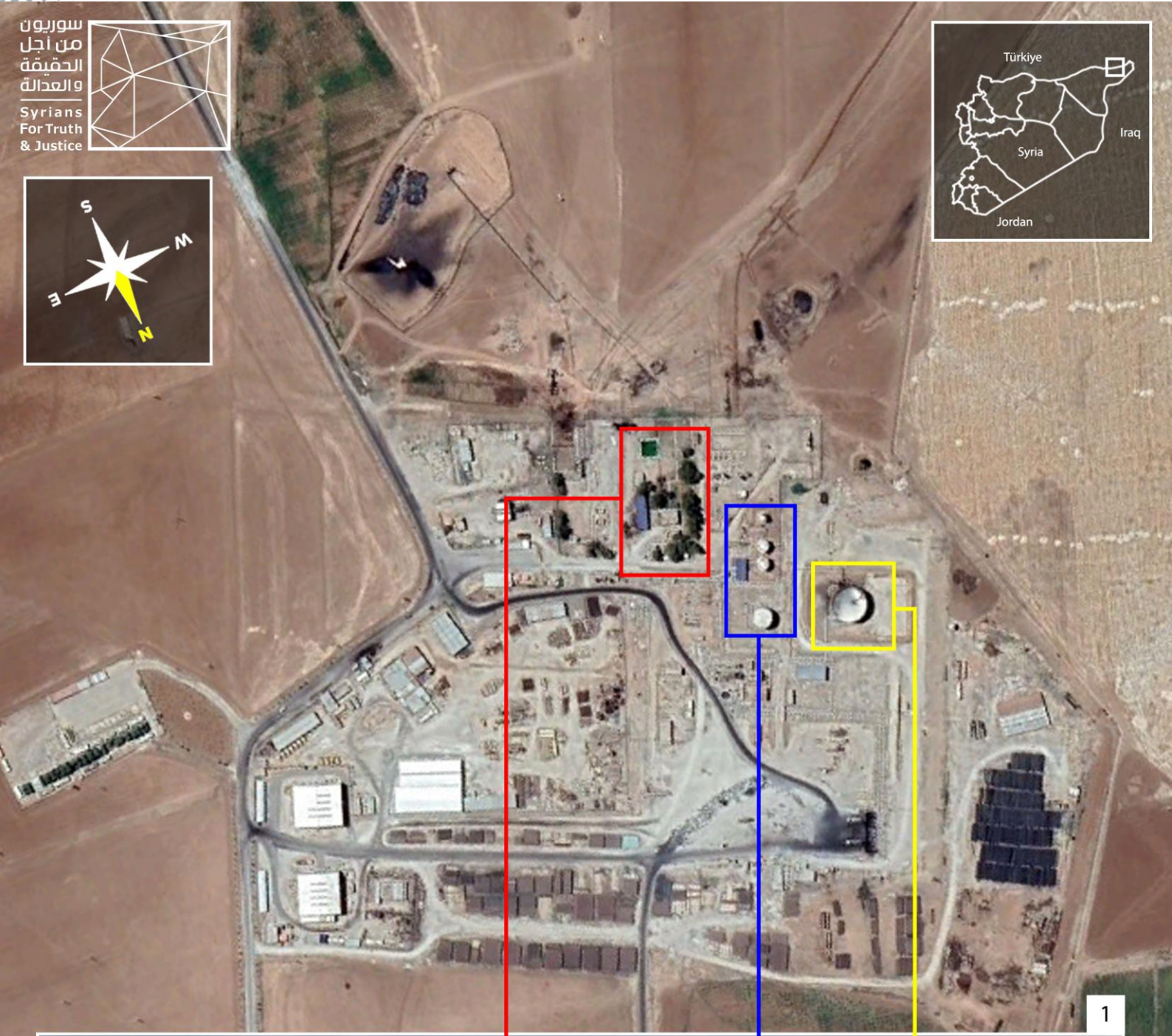
<sup>20</sup> The witness opted to use a pseudonym. He was interviewed in person by STJ's field researcher on 7 October 2023.





Image 10-Destruction at the Auda oil field caused by the Turkish airstrike on 5 October 2023. Source: STJ, shared by Sarmad Khalil.





1

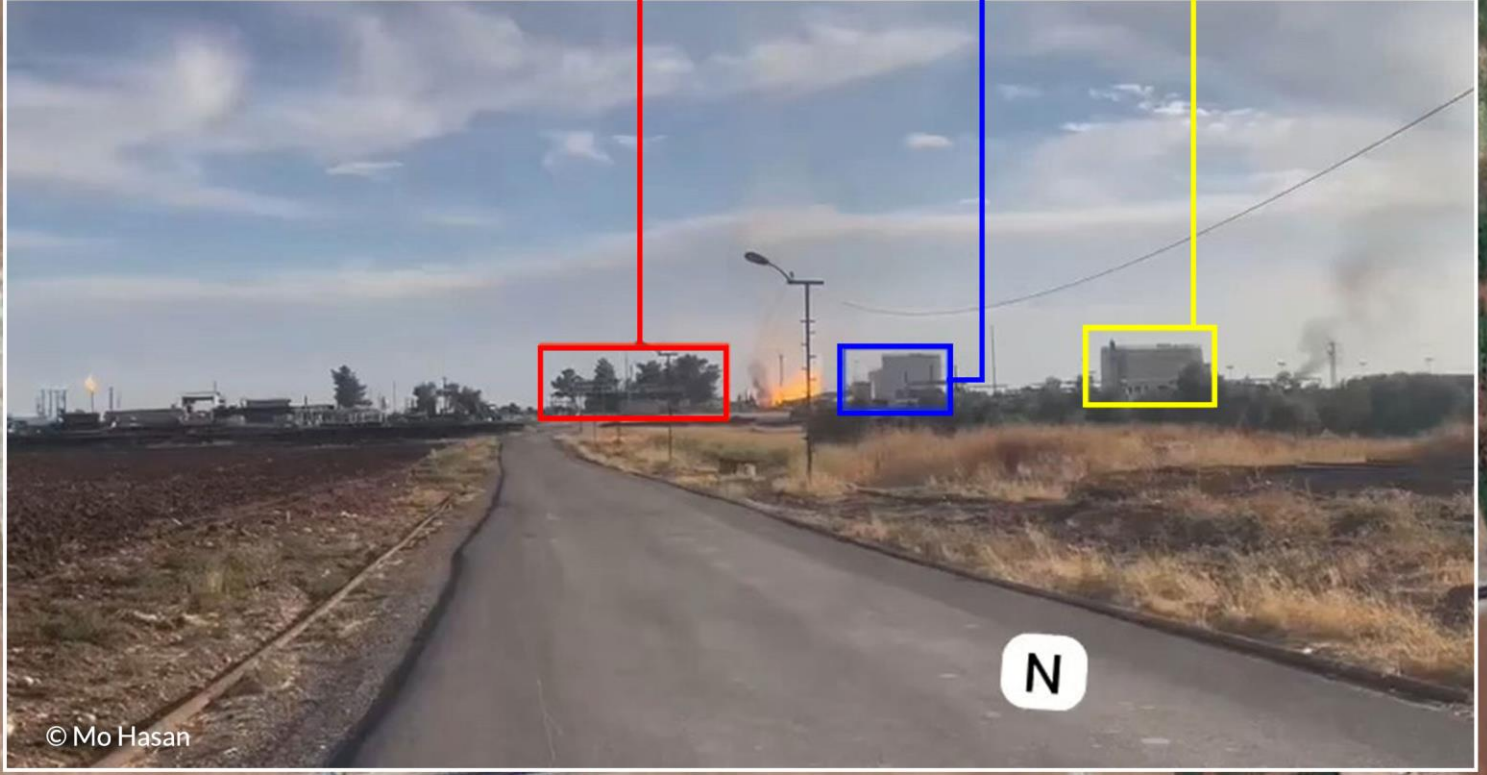




Image 11- Designed by STJ, the above image matches satellite footage of a site at the Auda oil field at the western entrance to the Qahtaniyah/Tirbespi town (geolocation: [37.015653, 41.584266](#)), with a screenshot (1) from a video of the targeted site after the Turkish airstrike on 5 October 2023 (source: [Mo Hasan](#)).

## The Strikes' Impact on Civilians

The losses caused by the Turkish airstrikes were not only material. The raids killed and wounded several of the targeted areas' residents. Among the victims is Muhammad al-Alaiwi, who died in one of four airstrikes on the Gerdahol oil wells at the western entrance to Qahtaniyah/Tirbespi town on 5 October 2023.

The victim's brother, Ali al-Alaiwi,<sup>21</sup> narrated the details of the horrifying strike, which also wounded his nephew's face. With the scarcity of medical resources in northeast Syria, the young boy had to travel to Damascus to undergo surgery for the shrapnel that rested in his left eye. Ali recounted:

"At about 11:00 PM, a Turkish warplane began bombing the Gerdahol oil wells... First, the aircraft hit the site, located nearly 500 meters away from my house and (approximately 200 meters) to the right of an Asayish checkpoint. The aircraft then bombed the second site, next to our house, north of the road. It returned and hit the third site, one kilometer or a little more away from our house, along the same line as the first attack. The aircraft attacked the sites one by one around the same time. The plane then returned and re-attacked the first site. There were two aircraft. One of them was carrying out the attacks, but I remain unsure what the purpose of the second was."

Ali added:

"The fourth strike (the second on the first site) was terrifying. [The shelling] did not resemble that of a bomb, artillery, or mortar shell; it was far more intense. A moment later, we could see nothing... and the walls cracked because of the bombing. The entire house shook as if an earthquake had struck. Cracks appeared in one room, and we could pass our hands through them."

Ali reported hearing shrapnel hitting the walls, as well as his nephew's screams announcing his father's wounds. Upon arriving at his brother's house, Ali was stunned:

"His brother's body lay before him. His head was severed. Blood stained the white-painted entrance, ceiling, and living room at [his brother's] house. Bits and pieces of flesh splattered across the wall. It was a chilling sight."

Ali said that he collected more than five kilograms of shrapnel, some of which were the size of a hand, from his house, his brother's house, and the street, stressing that the targeted location was **"civilian, and there are no military posts"** in its surrounds, except for an Asayish checkpoint, which is 200 meters away from the impact site.

Ali and his family have been battling with emotional and mental distress after the airstrike:

"We are still terrified. Usually, I would go to bed at around 10:00 PM, but now I cannot sleep before 1:00 AM. Every day, insomnia attacks me. I struggle as I wait for the clock to strike 11:00, feeling as though the shelling will occur again at the same exact time."

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<sup>21</sup> The source was interviewed in person by STJ's field researcher on 28 November 2023.

This hour has become an ominous sign for my entire family. The family gathers, and we wait for the raid."

He noted that airstrikes had become a catalyst for migration from the region:

"Before the incident, we never thought about emigrating or traveling. This is my land. I was born, grew up, and studied here. I lived here all my life... However, what happened erased all the hopes I pinned on this place, forcing me to consider migration today."

Over 100 people seeking treatment for urinary incontinence and several others grappling with Type 1 diabetes visited Ali, who is an herbalist. His clients had one thing in common—they all developed those symptoms after the airstrikes.

Like Ali, Rami al-Abdulah,<sup>22</sup> a night guard at the oil site 231, is still grappling with trauma after he witnessed two airstrikes, separated from one another by a very brief interval. The strikes hit the site at the western entrance to Qahtaniyah/Tirbespi town at around 11:00 PM on 5 October 2023. As a result of the horrifying raid, Rami is experiencing memory confusion. Nevertheless, he vividly recalls how shrapnel nearly severed his leg and how the "large and countless" fragments shattered his booth's windows and damaged its contents. Rami narrates:

"Shrapnel hit my leg, fractured my thighbone (into two pieces), and removed a huge chunk of the thigh. I cannot tell how large or what shape the shrapnel that injured me had. I could barely see through the dust and smoke. I only saw the fire devouring the site. Everything there melted due to the fire, and the wreckage was everywhere... I collapsed as soon as I attempted to stand up. I saw my leg [dangling] behind me. It was nearly amputated, with only nerves and some arteries still connected to my body. I tried to reposition my leg while it continued to bleed, but the shrapnel spread everywhere and over my head."

In addition to the severe leg injury that required treatment at a specialized hospital, Rami lost movement in three fingers due to another shard of shrapnel in his hand.

Rami said that the same site was targeted in 2022. However, the 2023 attack was more extensive, as it destroyed the entire facility. Rami believes that a warplane, not a drone, likely carried out the October attack, as evidenced by the nearly 7-meter-deep crater it left behind. **"The attack destroyed the oil pumps and the reinforced floor. Back then, it felt like the earth had swallowed the site."**

Rami emphasized that there are no military centers or units in the area, and the site and its surroundings are civilian in nature. There is only an Asyish checkpoint at the town's western entrance.

Attef al-Abdullah<sup>23</sup> said that he and his brother miraculously survived a missile that landed only 50 meters from where they rushed to rescue their brother Rami. He added:

"I saw how the giant pump was sent flying and the fire erupting at one of the tanks. The shelling was intense, and the site was completely destroyed."

Attef also said that horror forced the majority of the residents in the surrounding areas of the targeted oil sites and facilities to flee. Ninety percent of the people in his neighborhood, al-Tanak, sought shelter in the suburbs. He added that several families are considering building homes in the farther villages, especially those who live in al-Tanak, al-Thawra, and al-Jihad

<sup>22</sup> The witness opted to use a pseudonym. He was interviewed in person by STJ's field researcher on 26 November 2023.

<sup>23</sup> The witness opted to use a pseudonym. He was interviewed in person by STJ's field researcher on 27 November 2023.

neighborhoods south of the al-Qahtaniyah/Tirbespi town, while many, including him, are contemplating escaping Syria altogether.

Samar Muhammad,<sup>24</sup> Rami's wife and a resident of the al-Thawra neighborhood said the airstrikes that targeted several sites in her town, al-Qahtaniyah/Tirbespiyeh, had a massive psychological impact on the town's people. The shelling had traumatizing effects on her neighborhood's residents as the attacks shattered the windows of some homes and damaged the tin roofs of others, even though the neighborhood is remote from the location of the direct attack.

While the entire community was in the throes of fear after the attacks, Samar, an expecting mother of three, said that her family also had to deal with the severe injury of her husband, particularly her 4-year-old son, Ra'ed:

"[He] could not recognize his father when he visited him at the al-Murad Hospital. When his father returned home, Ra'ed struggled to approach him, afraid of the wounds, the bandages all over his body, and the changes in his features after the incident. Later, we noticed that he was wetting himself day and night, which he had not experienced before the airstrikes. His energy and behavior had also changed significantly. He now fears darkness."

Samar also reported that several children in her neighborhood developed urinary incontinence.

Nour Hamza,<sup>25</sup> a mother of six and middle school teacher in al-Qahtaniyah/Tirbespiyeh town, also spoke about the horror that gripped her and her son during the airstrike on the town's oil site 231:

"I was asleep in my room. My little son, almost eight years old, was lying next to me. The room's door was slammed open. I woke up to the sound of a huge blast. I opened my eyes to a reddish-orange glow shrouding the interiors, emanating from the fire that erupted after the strike. The ground trembled. I had what felt like a nervous breakdown. My hands, arms, and entire body went catatonic. I screamed in panic and lost consciousness. The blast was so massive that I thought it took place near my house, despite the large distance separating us from the [attack's] location... My son was also asleep and woke up fretting. He remained motionless, unable to speak or move. Since then, he has never left the house. He is even scared to go out in the daytime."

Nours' two daughters had urinary incontinence for two months after the airstrikes, like several of the town's elementary school students. She learned about the student's situation from a teacher in another school, who relayed to her the deep concerns of their parents.

Nour reported that even distant, loud noises could startle her students and cause them to jump in fear:

"The school where I teach is located across from the oil wells extensively hit by the Turkish airstrikes. It had incurred some damage. The window's glass shattered due to pressure. Also, several children stopped attending classes. When I inquired about the reasons, they said they were terrified of the shelling. The students remained out of school for nearly ten days."

<sup>24</sup> The witness opted to use a pseudonym. She was interviewed in person by STJ's field researcher on 27 November 2023.

<sup>25</sup> The witness opted to use a pseudonym. She was interviewed in person by STJ's field researcher on 27 November 2023.



Nour also said that a rapid mass displacement followed the airstrike. A large number of residents fled the northern neighborhood of the town. Like residents in the town's other affected parts, they sought the area's suburbs, fearing the bombing. She added:

"Even I, who had never thought about migration, was prepared to depart immediately after the air raids if the borders had opened."

Muntaha Ahmad,<sup>26</sup> a teacher in Gerdahol village in the countryside of Qahtaniyah/Tirbespiyeh town, provided a consistent account, particularly highlighting how the airstrikes on the evening of October 5 had negatively impacted the students' behavior and level of engagement at school. She said:

"Many students missed classes...The kids were terrified even by a small blow to the table or a door slamming shut... The students fell behind on their coursework and experienced a loss of interest in their studies. They would not go to the yard to play for two weeks after the airstrikes."

Muntaha noted that a large number of her village's residents, primarily women and children, fled their homes as the airstrikes hit. They remained out of their homes temporarily; however, **"migration and leaving the country have become a priority for a few of the village's people,"** Muntaha added, saying they are no longer capable of enduring insecurity and the ever-deteriorating living conditions, including acute water shortages and blackouts, in the aftermath of the airstrikes.

## The Air Campaign in December 2023

On 25 December 2023, Türkiye launched the second extensive and large-scale air campaign in northeast Syria, using both drones and fighter jets. On 26 December 2023, the Turkish Intelligence Service [announced](#) the toll of the attacks, revealing that they destroyed nearly **50** facilities in various cities across the region, including Qamishli/Qamishlo, Amuda, and Ayn al-Arab/Kobani. These airstrikes targeted several healthcare facilities, killed at least **nine** civilians, and injured at least **18** others.

The Turkish authorities allege the targeted facilities were used by the PKK and the YPG. However, information and evidence compiled by STJ through field visits to several targeted facilities and interviews conducted with workers there corroborate that these facilities are civilian objects; provide services to the local community; and were not used for military purposes. Most importantly, the collected information proves Türkiye's non-commitment to avoiding causing harm to civilians and civilian objects.

Furthermore, STJ identified and geolocated eight out of **11** facilities that appeared in [drone footage](#) of the December 25 attacks, published by the Turkish media outlet TRT HABER. Among the attacked facilities were the [Simav printing press](#), a cotton ginning facility, known by its old name as the Umm al-Fursan mill, and a straw plant, which are all located in the Qamishli/Qamishlo city. The airstrikes on these locations have been investigated by STJ in a [report](#) published on 23 February 2023.

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<sup>26</sup> The witness opted to use a pseudonym. She was interviewed in person by STJ's field researcher on 16 February 2024.

## Key Targeted Healthcare Facilities

On 25 December 2023, Turkish drones [targeted](#) the Mashta Nour healthcare center in the Ayn al-Arab/Kobani city and rendered it out of service, according to Khalid Muhammad,<sup>27</sup> one of the center's employees, who saw the three-story center suffer two airstrikes separated from each other by 10 minutes. He added that the attack did not even spare the ambulances.

In a [comment](#) to Target media platform, the Co-President of the Health Committee in the Euphrates region, Ahmad Mahmoud, said the center "used to host more than 500 patients on a day in different departments of the medical clinics and those responsible for psychological assistance and first-aid provision," estimating the costs of the damages at 200,000 USD.



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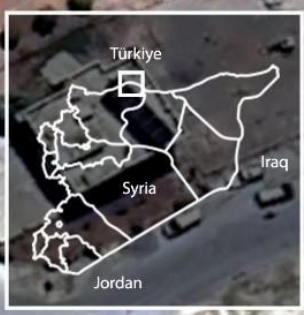


Image 12-Screenshot from a [video](#) documenting the damages incurred by the Mashta Nour healthcare center in the Ayn al-Arab/Kobani city due to the Turkish airstrike on 25 December 2023. Source: Target Media Platform.

Image 13-Designed by STJ, the image below matches satellite footage of the Mashta Nour healthcare center in the Ayn al-Arab/Kobani city (geolocation: [36.890843, 38.342968](#)), with a screenshot (1) from drone footage of the Turkish airstrike on 25 December 2023 (Source: [TRT HABER](#)), as well as photos 2 (source: [Rojava TV](#)), and 3 (source: [Rojava Information Center](#)), which show the damage at the center after the raid.

<sup>27</sup> The witness opted to use a pseudonym. He was interviewed online by STJ's field researcher on 15 March 2024.





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On 25 December 2023, Turkish aircraft targeted the dialysis center in the Alaya neighborhood in Qamishli/Qamishlo city. The strikes caused extensive damage, disrupting the center's work and rendering its oxygen facility out of service. The attack did not result in casualties, as patients and workers were evacuated from the center after Turkish aircraft targeted, three times in a row, the Sadcob Energy Facility, 200 meters away from the center, according to the eyewitness, Khalil Al-Hassan,<sup>28</sup> who added:

"The bombing of the oxygen unit caught us off guard. While I was walking outside the center, I saw a missile pass over and hit the oxygen unit in the dialysis center's courtyard. The impact's force and intense pressure pushed us against the wall. We then looked at the strike site to see if the missile had caused casualties because the center was adjacent to civilian homes. Nobody was hurt, thank God."

In turn, Iyad Issa,<sup>29</sup> the above-cited witness's friend, described the attack moment and some of the damage that befell the center:

"I saw a red flash, like a meteor coming from behind and hitting the oxygen cylinder filling center. Then we threw ourselves on the ground, and I saw a large fire behind the center. Small fragments that looked like small stones and pebbles fell on us, but we were not injured... Upon entering the center, we noticed all the doors were open; the windows were unhinged; their glass was shattered; and the ceiling panels had come apart. There was debris and destruction everywhere."

Notably, the destroyed dialysis center was the only one of its kind in the region, providing regular services to about 70 kidney patients in Qamishli/Qamishlo city and its countryside, all the way to Amuda and al-Darbasiyah cities and their suburbs, and from the east to the al-Qahtaniyah/Tirbespi town and its countryside, according to Rafi' Muhammad,<sup>30</sup> one of the center's administrators:

"When I arrived at the center, it was in miserable condition. The glass in all the windows had been shattered and spread throughout the center. The pre-fabricated ceiling had collapsed in some of the rooms. The water distillation unit sustained the most damage out of all the destroyed items. We use the unit for kidney dialysis, as we consume about 15 thousand liters of distilled water in the center daily."

According to Rafi', the destroyed oxygen unit provided supplies to all hospitals and healthcare centers in the Jazira region. The unit produced 250 oxygen cylinders daily and sold the cylinder for a nominal price of 15,000 Syrian pounds (SYP), in contrast to other oxygen facilities that sell the cylinder for 50,000 SYP.

Image 14- Designed by STJ, the image below matches satellite footage of the oxygen unit at the dialysis center in Qamishli/Qamishlo city (geolocation:[41.262560,37.053993](#)), with a screenshot 1 from drone footage of the Turkish airstrike on 25 December 2023 (Source: [TRT HABER](#)), as well as photos 2 (source: [Rojava Information Center](#)), 3 (source: [North Press Agency](#)), and 4 (source: [North Press Agency](#)) which show the damage at the center after the raid.

<sup>28</sup> The witness opted to use a pseudonym. He was interviewed in person by STJ's field researcher on 27 December 2023.

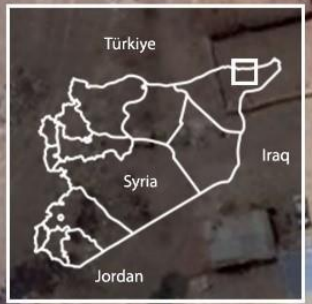
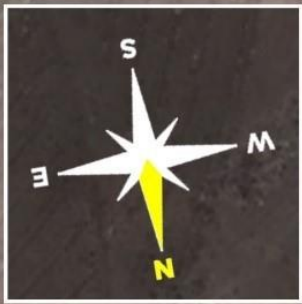
<sup>29</sup> The witness opted to use a pseudonym. He was interviewed in person by STJ's field researcher on 4 February 2024.

<sup>30</sup> The source was interviewed in person by STJ's field researcher on 4 February 2024.





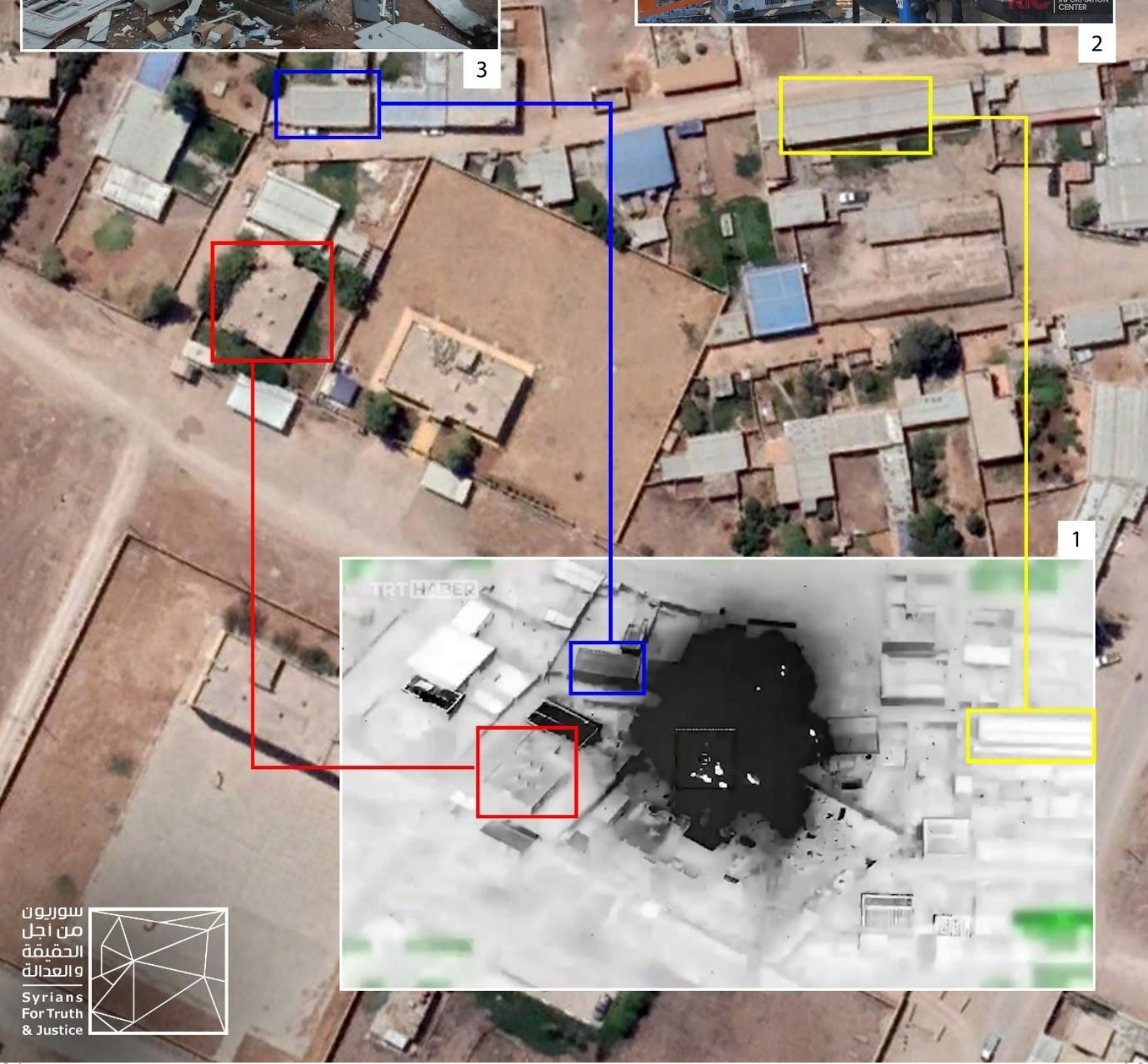
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Notably, this is not the first time the Turkish Air Force has attacked medical facilities in northeast Syria. In November 2022, Türkiye [targeted](#) a COVID-19 hospital in Ayn al-Arab/Kobani city and destroyed it.

On 25 December 2023, the Turkish airstrikes also targeted the outskirts of Washokani for internally displaced people camp in al-Tuwaina village in the al-Hasakah city's countryside. The attack forced over ten humanitarian organizations and associations active in the camp to suspend their operations, according to Jawad Sharaf al-Din,<sup>31</sup> one of these organizations' workers.

Jawad said that due to disrupted activities, the camp residents lacked the daily water and bread allocations usually distributed by some of these organizations. He added:

"As we carried out our duties the morning after the airstrike, it became evident that multiple airstrikes had targeted the area near the camp wall, causing a state of panic and fear among the residents. I saw terror in the eyes of the camp's children, women, and older people. An older male IDP told me that he had not slept the whole night, afraid that the Turkish drones would return and hit the camp, and that the children in their family did not sleep either."

The day after the airstrike, a few organizations resumed operations, but they still suspended all activities inside the camp, including classes, literacy courses, and various vocational training workshops.

Notably, the Washokani camp is [home](#) to 2377 families, 16.876 people, who were displaced from Ayn al-Arab/Kobani following the Turkish Operation Peace Spring in 2019.



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Image 15- Screenshot from a [video](#) of the Turkish airstrike on the outskirts of the Washokani IDP Camp, al-Hasakah city's countryside on 25 December 2023. Source: ANHA.

<sup>31</sup> The source opted to use a pseudonym. He was interviewed in person by STJ's field researcher on 19 February 2024.



## The Air Campaign in January 2024

In January 2024, Türkiye launched its third intensive air campaign, which continued from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month. Warplanes and drones targeted at least **64** locations in different areas across the region. The aircraft again bombed most of the region's critical civilian infrastructure, including the Suwaydiyah gas and power plant and sites at the Auda oil field, all of which had suffered complete or partial destruction in the previous two campaigns. This time, the aircraft rendered the attacked facilities out of operation. The airstrikes [injured](#) six civilians, including two children.

### Key Retargeted Power Stations

On 14 January 2024, Turkish aircraft retargeted the power transfer station north of Qamishli/Qamishlo city and rendered it inoperable. This raid coincided with strikes that destroyed the Suwaydiyah power plant and the power transfer stations in al-Qahtaniyah/Tirbespi town, Amuda, Ayn Issa, and other areas, according to Wahid al-Mousa,<sup>32</sup> one of the station's workers. He noted that:

"This led to a real disaster. The area had no other spare transformers, and we could not determine the reparability [of those already installed]. The entire region of al-Hasakah, including its cities and countryside, lost regular electricity. Additionally, the Euphrates Dam became the main source of electricity, on which vital facilities became dependent, including hospitals, flour mills, and water wells that supply Qamishli/Qamishlo."

Wahid reported that the power outage and water shortage also affected Amuda, al-Darbasiyah, al-Qahtaniyah/Tirbespi, Remailan, al-Jawadiyah/Cil Axa, al-Malikiyah/Dêrik, and Ma'bada/Girkê Legê.



Image 16-Screenshot from a [video](#) documenting the condition of the power transfer station north of Qamishli/Qamishlo city following the Turkish airstrike on 14 January 2024. Source: Russia Today.

<sup>32</sup> The source was reinterviewed in person by STJ's field researcher on 20 February 2024.

In a consistent statement, Mustafa Suleiman, the Head of the Energy and Distribution Directorate in the Jazira Region, stated that during the third campaign:

"Not only did they bomb power transfer stations and transformers, but they also targeted the power plants and turbines. The Energy Corporation operated five of the twelve turbines, while the Oil Corporation operated the remaining seven. The twelve turbines were destroyed. In addition, [the aircraft] destroyed two 230/66 kilovolt and four 66/20 kilovolt transformers in the Suwaydiyah power plant. Additionally, the aircraft decimated Arena 66 in Suwaydiyah, destroying both residential and automatic circuits."

Highlighting the importance of the Suwaydiyah power plant, [targeted](#) and destroyed on 15 January 2024, Mustafa said:

"The plant and its turbines are the only electrical power generation station in the Jazira region. It was the one that supplied all the cities of the Jazira with electricity."

Before the airstrike, Musataf said, al-Hasakah city and its countryside occasionally used the station's electricity as a backup when problems occurred in its main supply line, which came from the Euphrates Dam.

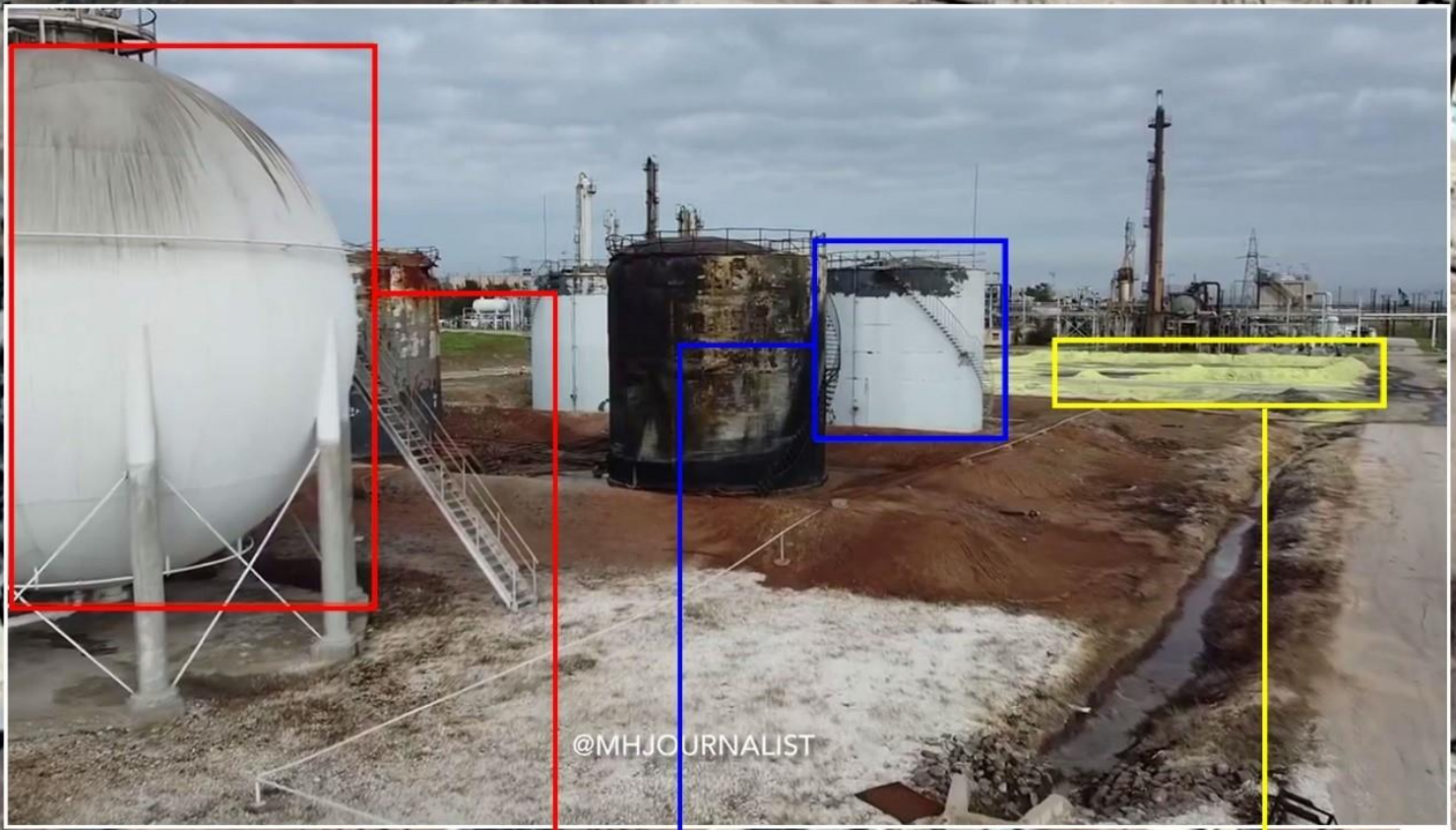
He added that, after the airstrike, the Energy Directorate used the sole electricity transmission line coming from the Euphrates Dam, which does not constitute an effective alternative to the targeted stations:

"The status of the Euphrates Dam is poor. Türkiye also is denying us water, and the produced electricity is insufficient to cover the Jazira region... We only have one remaining line, whose max transmission capacity is 80 megawatts. As a result, we made an effort to obtain and distribute 75 megawatts to water stations in every city and town in the Jazira region so that they could provide drinking water."

Mustafa noted that the electricity channeled from the Euphrates River was only sufficient to operate the water stations in Qamishli/Qamishlo, Amuda, and al-Qahtaniyah/Tirbespi, as well as supply the surrounding villages with two hours of electricity every two days. However, the major cities and towns in the region continued to experience a power outage on the day of the interview. Mustafa further stated that the attacks on electricity plants caused nearly three billion USD in losses.

Image 17- Designed by STJ, the image below matches satellite footage of the Suwaydiyah power plant (geolocation: [36.944456, 42.126309](#)) and a screenshot (1) from a video of the station after the Turkish airstrike on 15 January 2024 (source: [Journalist Mohammad Hasan](#)).





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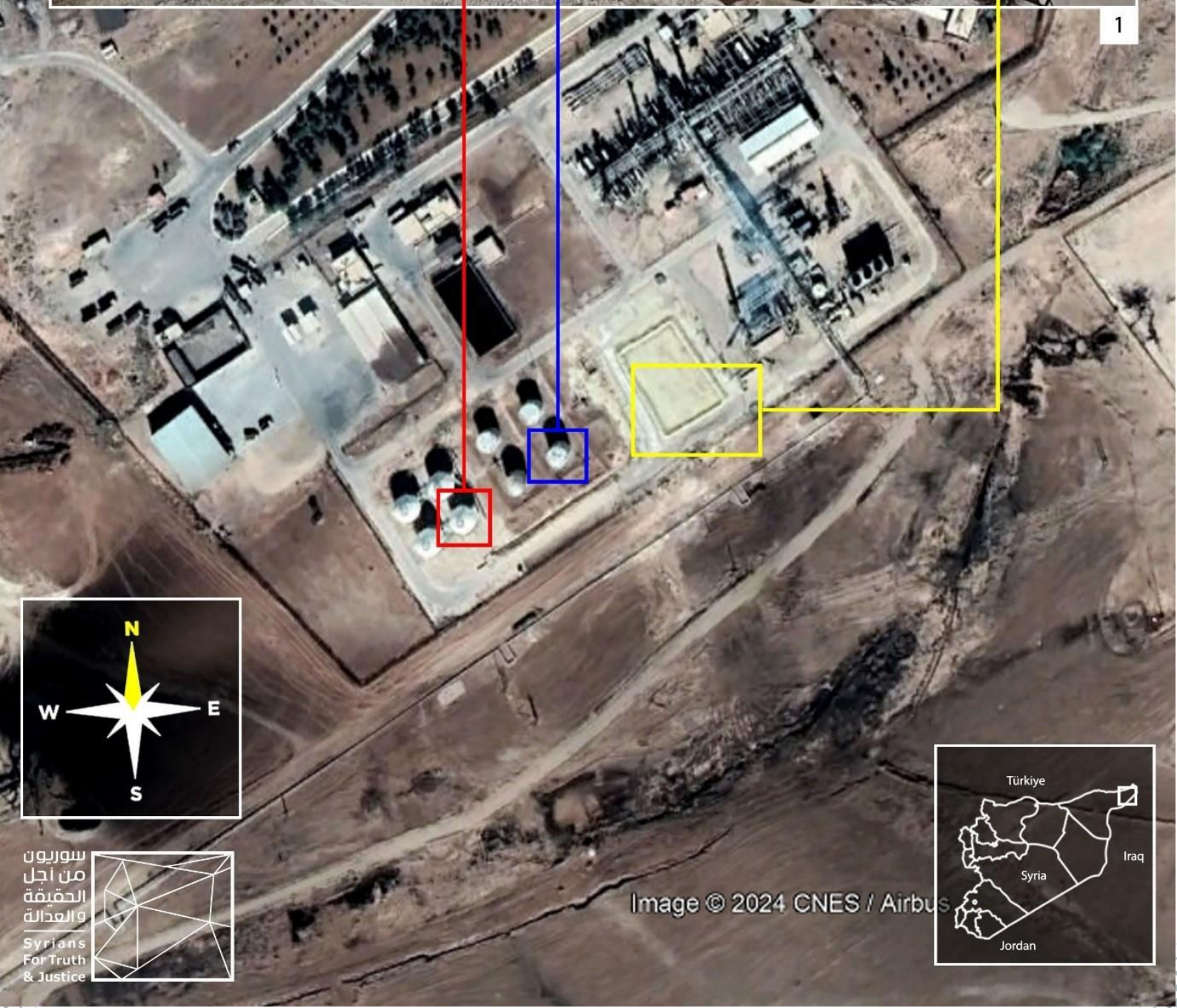
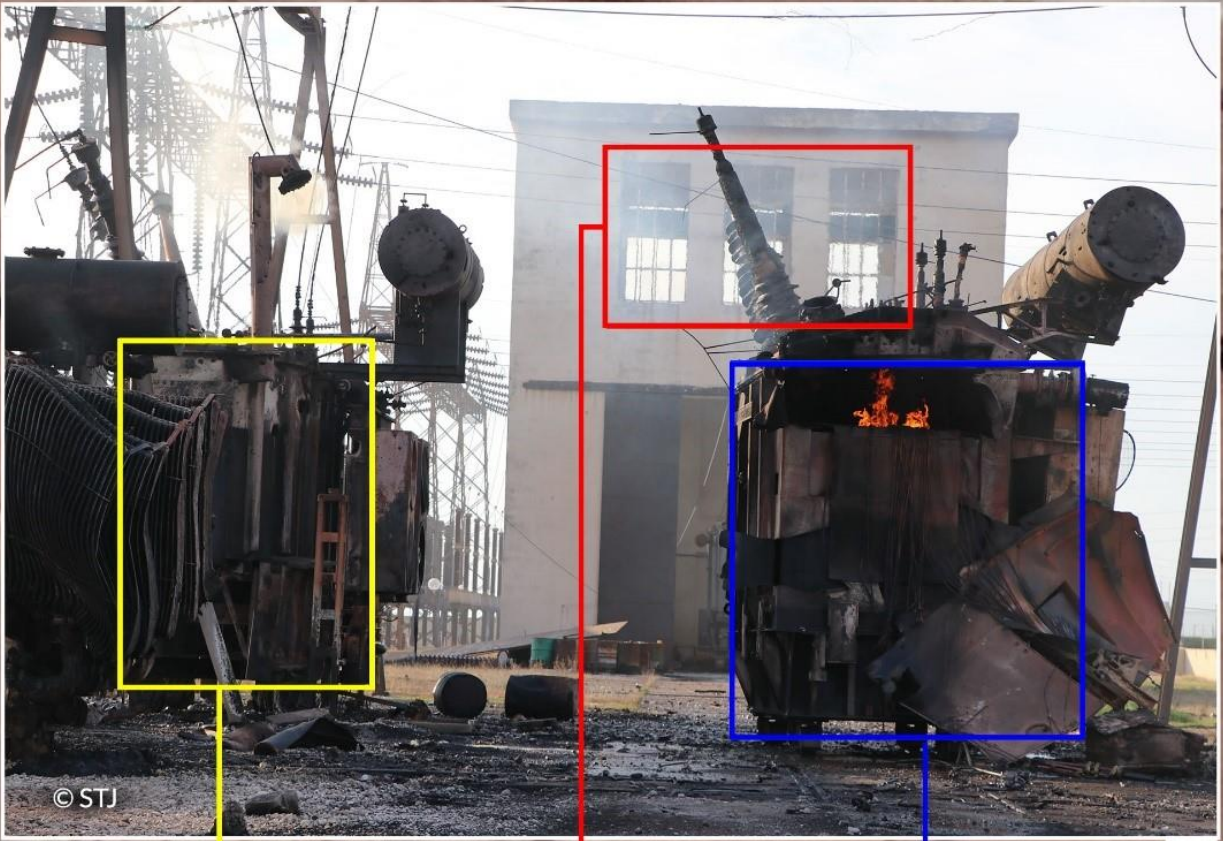


Image © 2024 CNES / Airbus







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Image © 2024 Maxar Technologies



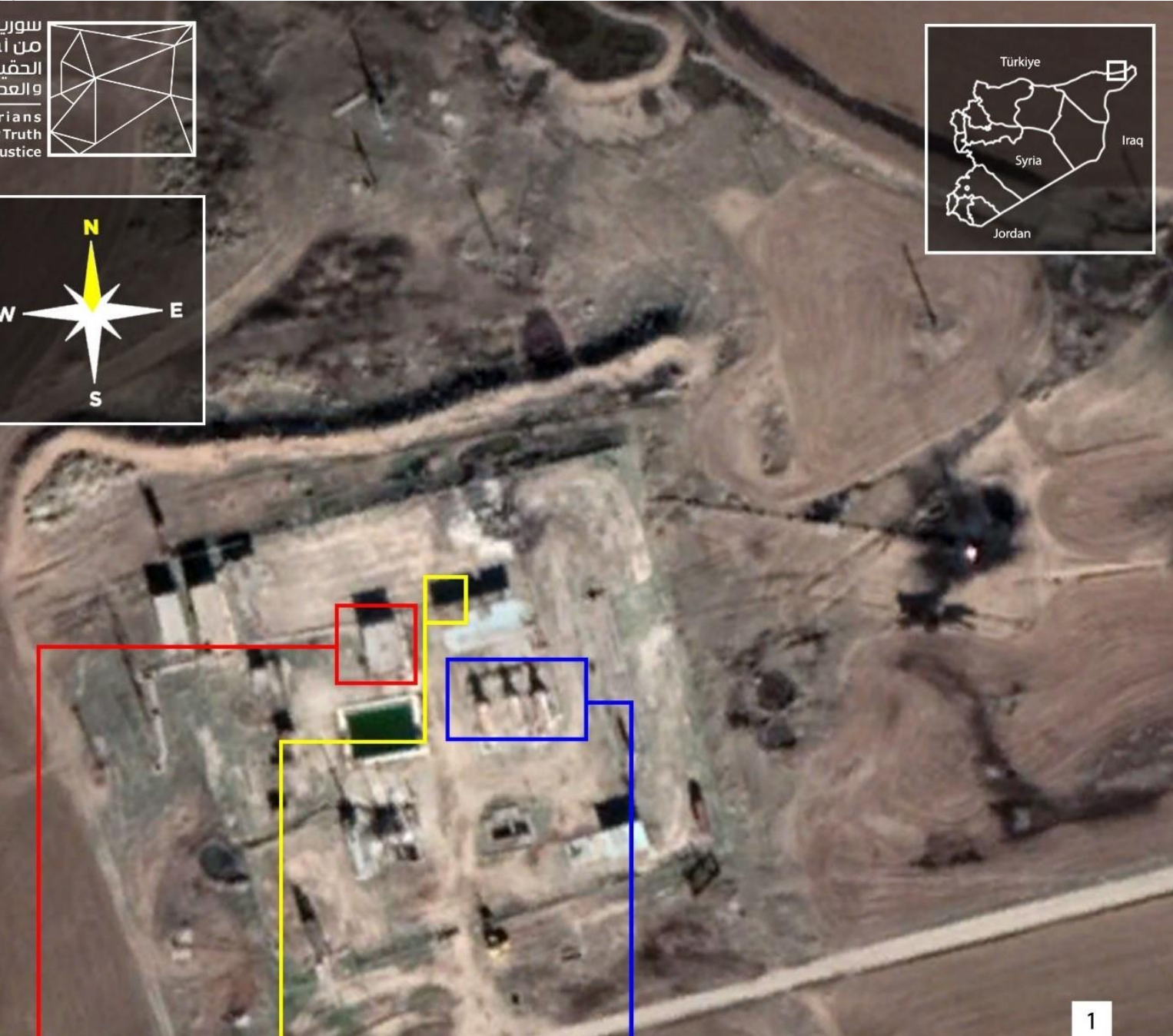
Image 18- Designed by STJ, the image above matches satellite footage of the Suwaydiyah power plant (geolocation: [37.085398, 41.566994](#)) and a photo (1) of the damage at the station after the Turkish airstrike on 15 January 2024 (source: Syrians for Truth and Justice, taken by photojournalist Ivan Hasib).

## Key Retargeted Energy Facilities

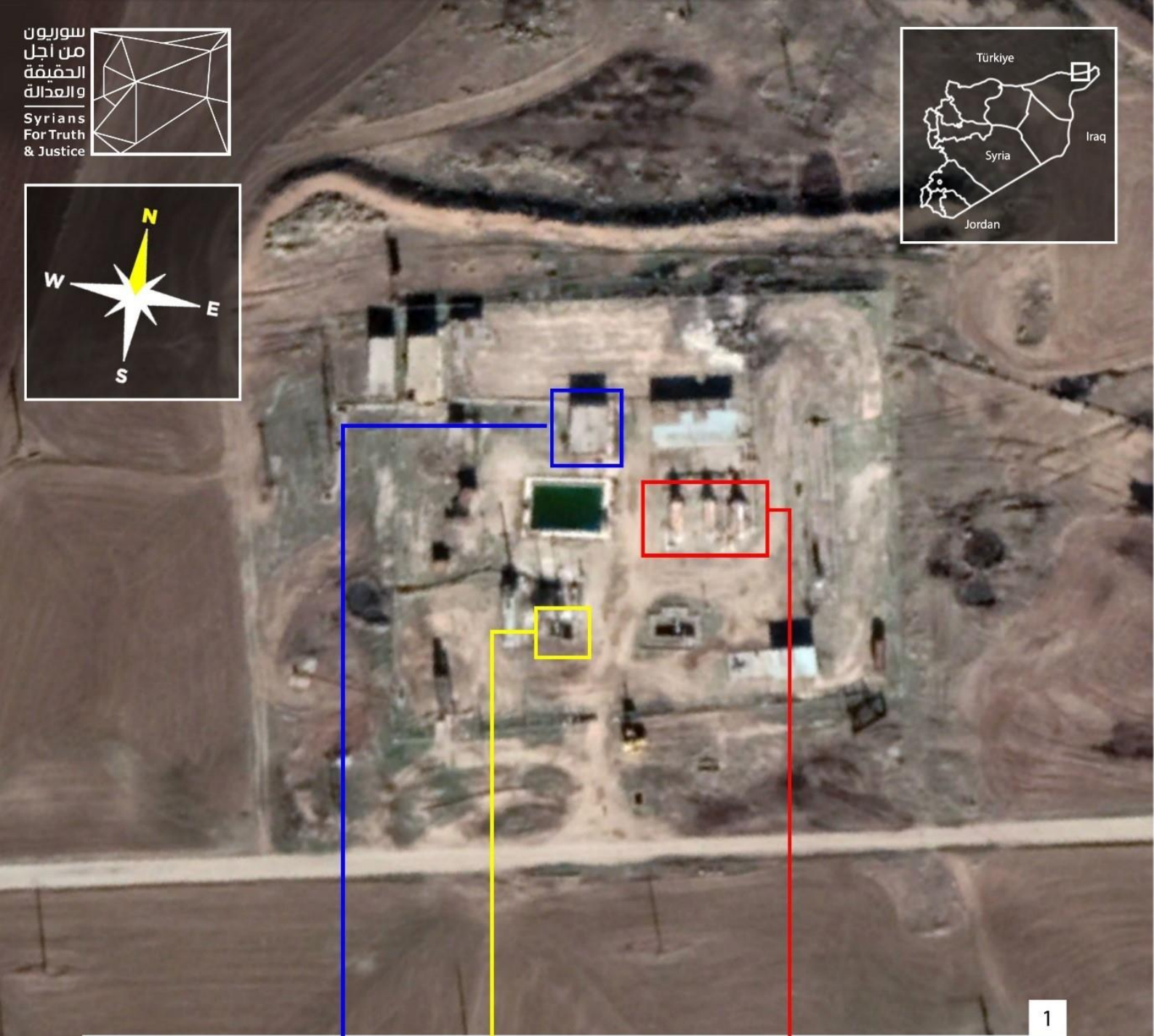
On 12 January 2024, Turkish aircraft retargeted the Zarba oil station in the northern countryside of al-Qahtaniyah/Tirbespiyeh town. Two missiles struck the station at around midnight. Citing two coworkers who were on duty at the time of the airstrike, Hassan Al-Ali said that one of the missiles fell on the crude oil heaters, while the second struck the oil collecting tanks.

Hassan added that the station, which used to produce approximately 1,000 cubic meters, or 5,000 barrels, of oil per day before the airstrikes, is now out of service.

Image 19- Designed by STJ, the image below matches satellite footage of the Zarba oil station near Mulla Abbas village in the northern countryside of al-Qahtaniyah/Tirbespi town (geolocation: [37.085398, 41.566994](#)), with photo 1 of the damage at the station after the Turkish airstrike on 12 January 2024 (source: [Kurdish News Network](#)).







1

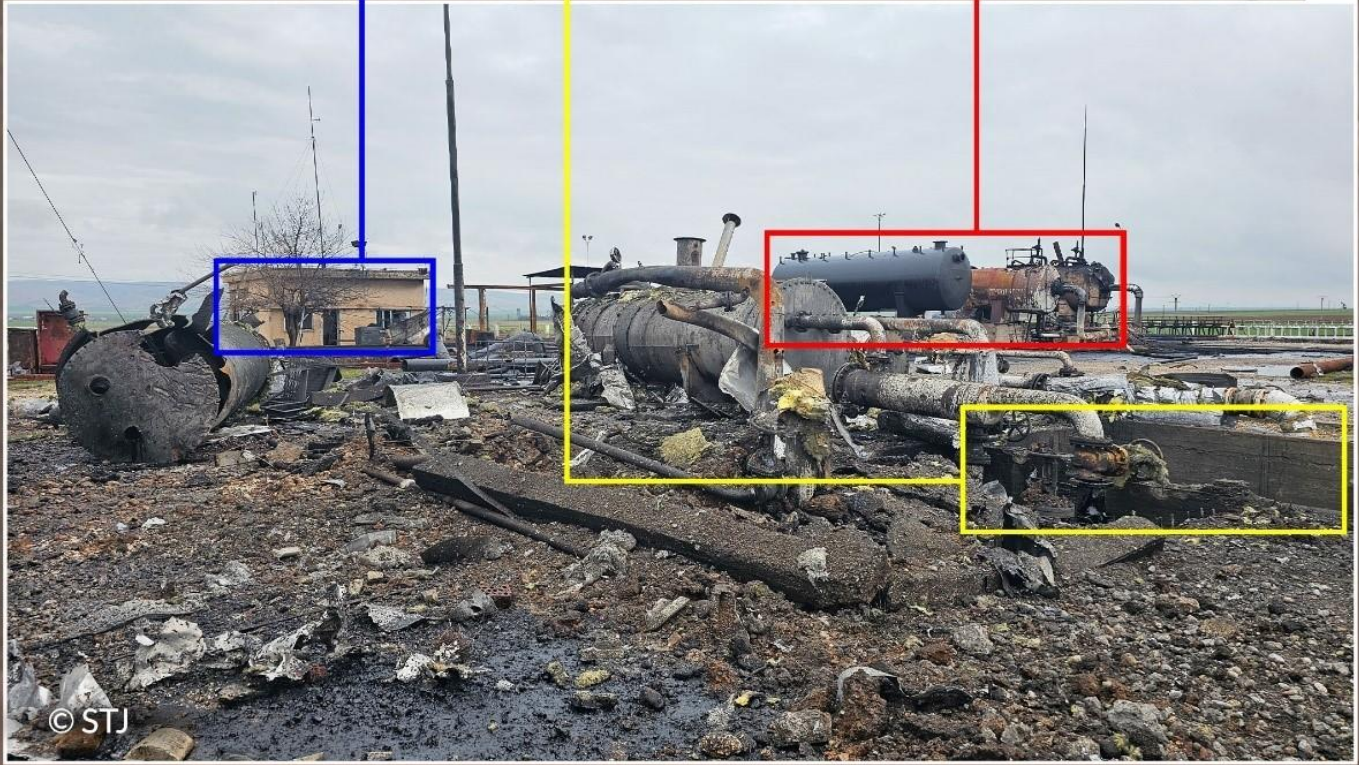


Image 20- Designed by STJ, the image above matches satellite footage of the Zarba oil station near Mulla Abbas village in the northern countryside of al-Qahtaniyah/Tirbespi town (geolocation: [37°05'12"N 41°34'01"E](#)), with photo 1 of the damage at the station after the Turkish airstrike on 12 January 2024 (source: STJ, captured by photojournalist Ivan Hasib).

The airstrikes also targeted the Auda oil field station. The strikes on 12 January 2024 focused on the gas production facilities in the field, unlike the attacks in the first campaign, which targeted the oil production facilities and the main oil collection tanks, according to Abdulaziz Muhammad,<sup>33</sup> a worker at the field. He added:

"They targeted the gas facilities and caused them extensive damage. They also reattacked the collection tanks and put them out of service. There is a flare pit at the station, which I do not recall seeing extinguished. However, due to the great extent of the damage in the station, the [oil] wells were stopped, and this flame has been out since then. Currently, the three collection tanks are destroyed and inoperable... along with the oil transportation line."

Abdulaziz believes that a warplane carried out the airstrike:

"Drones cannot cause this level of destruction. The [aircraft] left a ten-meter-deep hole under the collection tanks. The warehouses have armored asphalt floors, but [the aircraft] still created three to four-meter-deep holes there."

Image 21- Designed by STJ, the image below matches satellite footage of the Auda oil field at the western entrance to the Qahtaniyah/Tirbespi town (geolocation: [37.004356, 41.574045](#)), with photos 1 (source: [Journalist Mohammad Hasan](#)), 2 and 3 (source: STJ, captured by photojournalist Ivan Hasib) of the damage at the station after the Turkish airstrike on 12 January 2024.

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<sup>33</sup> The source was reinterviewed in person by STJ's field researcher on 17 February 2024.





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Image © 2024 CNES / Airbus



## The Strikes' Impact on Civilians

During the third campaign, the Turkish airstrikes injured six civilians, among them Muhammad Ayoub,<sup>34</sup> a worker at the Suwaydiyah gas plant. Muhammad's hand was wounded by shrapnel during the airstrike on the station on 12 January 2024:

"The aircraft hit the site and the turbines on repeat. Seeing the situation, we left our positions in the control room in the drying department in the southeastern part of the facility. This is where electricity is produced. We retreated to a different location to escape the shelling. We sat there and watched. We saw a giant ball of fire rising tens of meters into the sky. The shelling was so extensive that the shrapnel and steel fragments were the size of an airplane. A shard of shrapnel hit my hand, and blood started seeping."

Said Yahia,<sup>35</sup> a maintenance technician at the Suwaydiyah gas plant, talked about the damage the plant suffered due to the Turkish airstrikes on 15 June 2024 and how it affected the population's access to household gas. He stressed that a "great catastrophe" might be awaiting the region:

"Several pumps were devastated, and the gas pipelines were significantly damaged. Similar destruction befell household gas pipelines, which channelled the stored gas to the bottling department... The plant is currently out of service, and there is no local production... The plant's daily production ranged between 13,000 and 15,000 household gas cylinders. This was extremely beneficial to the region. Due to a lack of supplies, [the region] has to import household gas from outside [Syria]."

He added:

"The bombing of the plant had a significant impact on the region and its population. The household gas cylinder price spiked to 10 USD from half a USD before the airstrikes. Additionally, the largest portion of the plant's workforce is currently unemployed."

The Turkish airstrikes on oil facilities also had adverse impacts on the environment. Bilind Ahmed,<sup>36</sup> Director of the Humanitarian and Development Cooperation (HDC), said:

"Attacks on oil stations resulted in spills. Oil leaked into the Jaghjagh River in Qamishlo, the al-Jarrah River in al-Qahtaniyah/Tirbespi, and the al-Rad River in al-Jawadiyah/Cil Axa, all of which meet and flow into the Euphrates River. The local administration tried cleaning these rivers, but there has certainly been great damage to the agricultural sector, [especially to farmers] who irrigate their crops from those rivers."

Bilind noted that the Turkish strikes on oil facilities in early 2024 exacerbated the oil leakage into the rivers affected during the first campaign.

<sup>34</sup> The witness was interviewed in person by STJ's field researcher on 21 March 2024.

<sup>35</sup> The source opted to use a pseudonym. He was interviewed in person by STJ's field researcher on 25 February 2024.

<sup>36</sup> The source was interviewed in person by STJ's field researcher on 3 March 2024.



## ABOUT STJ

Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ) started as an idea in a co-founder's mind while attending the U.S. Middle-East Partnership Initiative's (MEPI) Leaders for Democracy Fellowship program (LDF) in 2015. The idea became a reality and flourished into an independent, non-profit, impartial, non-governmental human rights organization.

STJ's beginnings were more than humble; initially, it only reported stories of Syrians who experienced arbitrary arrest, enforced disappearance, or torture. Planted in fertile soil, the seed of this project grew into an established human rights organization licensed in the Middle East and the European Union. STJ today undertakes to detect and uncover violations of all types committed in all Syrian parts by the various parties to the conflict.

Convinced that Syria's diversity is a wealth, our researchers and volunteers serve with unflinching dedication to monitor, expose, and document human rights violations that continue unabated in Syria since 2011, regardless of the affiliation of the victims or perpetrators.