

# Impact of Turkish Occupation on Syriac Christians in North East Syria: 30 Day Situation Report

2019-11-11

ܡܪܟܝܝܬܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ



ܡܪܟܝܝܬܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ  
Syriac Strategic Research Center

[\\_ Syriac Strategic Research Center](#)



[\\_ Nasa Agency - Al Hassaka](#)



[\\_ Syriac Military Council](#)



Sara Younan



N - Nasrani



Daoud Oraha



Tal Tawel – Tal Tamer



Suroyo TV Syria



Suroyo TV – Tal Tawel – Tal Tamer



Suroyo TV - in Al Hassaka



Suroyo TV – in Al Hassaka



Suroyo TV – al-Qamishli

On Sunday the 9th of October, 2019, Turkey began „Operation Peace Spring“, a military invasion into the area controlled by the Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria – DAA. Turkish paid and controlled ground forces consisting mostly of radical fighters that were with ISIS and similar affiliated ideological groups, have committed human rights abuses, occupied homes and land and have terrorized much of the population. As a result over 400 people have died and another 400 000 are displaced and have become IDPs. These IDP families are currently living in temporary shelters in camps, schools or in houses with other families in the region, and are in urgent need of food, clothing and humanitarian assistance. In addition as the different cities are attacked we are seeing the people flee or be killed. Turkish forces continue to loot and pillage, while placing ISIS style graffiti on homes claiming them for their own.

Turkey has continuously violated the 17th of October ceasefire agreement and is also attacking and

bombing our people by air in areas outside of the agreed upon so called 'safe-zone.' For example on a daily basis since 4 November, 2019 till today they are conducting a 'war against the unbelievers'<sup>1</sup> by trying to destroy our ancient Syriac-Assyrian villages near Tel Tamer and in the Khabour valley in North East Syria. These villages are outside of the so called 'safety zone' and are defended by Christian forces only (MFS: Syriac Military Council). The U.S.A., which controls the air space, is allowing religious minorities that are peaceful citizens, to be bombed by Turkey. We call for the U.S.A to declare a 'no-fly zone' over the DAA.

## **Report by City:**

### **Ras Al-Ain (Rish Ceyno):**

As a result of the military offensive on October 10th, 2019, former ISIS, Al Qaeda and other radical Islamist fighters associated with Turkey are now in control of Ras Al-Ain. All 75 Christian families, 60 Syriac and 15 Armenian families, have fled the city. Turkish forces are looting and stealing the private property of civilians in the city, which is a war crime. They have looted the contents of houses, shops, warehouses and agricultural machinery. There are 205 houses and 120 commercial and industrial shops owned by Christians (Syriacs and Armenians) in the city of Ras Al-Ain. All were looted and are being occupied as centers for these radical armed groups.

In the administrative boundary of Ras Al-Ain the Syriac Christians farm 10.500 Hectare divided into 10 villages of terms of agricultural land. All agricultural machineries and equipment, as well as crops (wheat, barley, cotton) have been looted by these radical armed groups. Hundreds of Christian families lost their source of livelihood. Loosing the lands, means loosing their capital. As Turkish mercenaries now occupy these lands, they will profit from the agriculture production.

Sara Younan, a displaced woman from Ras Al-Ain, is currently living in a temporary shelter in al-Hassaka. She like many others, fled with her family when a Turkish shell landed near her home. She fears she will not be able to return to Ras Al-Ain, where she was born

Tal Abyad:

Before the Turkish military offensive on October 9th, 2019, 15 Armenian families lived in Tal Abyad. The city is now under the control of Turkish radical armed groups. The Syriacs and the Armenians played an important role in the construction and development of Tal Abyad. They also own many properties and real estate, which was their only source of livelihood. Currently they are displaced in several provinces of Syria, including Aleppo and al-Qamishli.

The Syrian National Army, just like ISIS, is marking the Christian homes declaring that they have confiscated the properties for their sole use. The house in this picture belonged to Mr. Wanis, one of the Armenian families, who fled during the Turkish military offensive on Tal Abyad. His house has been occupied. All houses of Christian families have been marked with the Arabic letter "N", the meaning of "Nasrani" – Christian. This is the same procedure of ISIS.

### **Tal Tamer and Khabour villages:**

Tal Tamer and Khabour villages are important and special centers of the Syriac Assyrian people. 33 villages are located alone on the banks of the Khabour River, which one of the largest gathering of Christians in the region. When ISIS took control of the area in February 2015 many fled to other Syrian areas or even outside the country. ISIS committed massacres against civilians and abducted hundreds of members of this Christian population. Now, as these armed groups enter and approach their villages, most civilians have been displaced to the city of al-Hassaka. Battles in these villages are continuing with armed groups at times some 3 km away from the villages of Khabour and the city of Tal Tamer.



**This area is outside of the safe-zone and is defended by members of the MFS (Syriac Military Council), and not by the YPG Kurdish forces.**

These Turkish radical armed groups are advancing with Turkish air support given by the U.S.A., which refuses to implement a no-fly zone.

Daoud Oraha from the village of Tall Tawil, who chose not to leave the village said: "this is my village, this is my home and I will not leave here, and this is my house, my land and my property". Mr. Daoud also said that two shells landed and targeted a house in the village owned by fellow Christian, Mr. George Kajo.

### **Military activities:**

On the on 2nd of November The Syrian Military Council announced that they will take the lead in protecting the villages of Khabour. The official statement stressed that "the Syriac Military Council (MFS) will be deployed on all front lines' in an effort to halt the Turkish so called reasoning that they are attacking YPG terrorists. Despite the entire area and forces being Syriac Christians Turkey continues to pummel our civilians and attempt to occupy these villages outside of the buffer zone. We believe that this shows the true intention of Turkey; to occupy and ethnically cleanse this region of their indigenous people.

Following a statement of the Assyrian People Council, calling to take up arms and to defend all Assyrian land against the radical Islamist groups:

Robert Eisho, a security official in the village of Tall Tawil, said that: the crimes of these Turkish armed groups, is no different than that of what ISIS committed. They are taking place with the support of NATO ally Turkey, and they want to force the rest of our people to abandon their homes, and make a demographic change in our villages and our region. He appealed to all Syriac-Assyrian people to volunteer and protect the villages of Khabour. He also demanded the international community stop this barbaric attack that is threatening our very existence as Christians.

### **Humanitarian activities:**

Syriac Cross Organization for Relief and Development, in collaboration and partnership with international NGO's and local CSOs and churches, such as Mor Isya (Syriac Catholic Church), Pontic-Orthodox Patriarchate and Shai Fund distributed emergency aid to IDPs, who fled from Drbasiyah and Ras al-Ain to al-Hassaka governorate. These families are now sheltered in schools or houses of their relatives in al-Hassaka.

The beneficiaries of the aid provided are from Christian (Syriacs and Armenians) and Muslim (Kurds and Arabs) background. Approximately 1.000 families have been supported with food parcels and hygiene kits.

The week starting 11 November Syriac Cross is preparing for more distributions, including medical assistance to those injured and in desperate need of surgery, treatment and pharmaceutical products. In addition, civilian homes that were destroyed by Turkish shelling have been assisted with rebuilding and new household contents.

Syriac Strategic Research Center

For more information contact us by Email:

syriacesc@gmail.com

