

15.01.2024: NEW ROUND OF TURKISH AIRSTRIKES ON NORTH AND EAST SYRIA TARGET ELECTRICITY, OIL AND OTHER CIVILIAN INFRASTRUCTURE

KEY POINTS

- Across 4 days, Turkey targets over 50 locations across North and East Syria (NES), conducting airstrikes on key electricity and oil infrastructure, as well as industrial sites, Asayish (Internal Security Forces) checkpoints, factories and civilian homes.
- 2 million people are without power and water, after Turkish strikes put 7 key electricity stations out of service.
- Six civilians are injured from Turkey's strikes, including two children.
- DAANES officials raise fears of Turkey's repeated destruction of oil and electricity infrastructure triggering humanitarian disaster in region home to millions already suffering power-blackouts, fuel shortages and water cuts.
- Turkey conducts repeat strikes on locations, targeting first responders who arrive after the initial strike.
- Rojava Information Center is available to provide on-the-ground comment, plus photos and videos from airstrike sites and contact to political representatives and humanitarian personnel for comment.



Qamishlo electricity station following Turkish airstrike, 15.01.2024

BACKGROUND

- Turkey's campaign of airstrikes against NES has been ongoing since the 2019 invasion, killing hundreds of civilians to date
- Turkey conducts periodic, limited yet destructive, airstrike campaigns, targeting NES' civilian infrastructure
- In October, one such Turkish campaign systematically struck NES' electricity, gas and oil facilities with airstrikes, causing extensive infrastructural and economic damage and worsening the already-fragile humanitarian situation in NES. In December, another such Turkish campaign targeted factories producing construction materials, agricultural products and foods, as well as grain silos, a mill, industrial sites, and medical facilities; Turkey's current airstrikes mirror these previous campaigns. Turkey is both re-striking energy infrastructure already targeted in previous aerial campaigns, as well as hitting factories and warehouses not targeted before
- As in December, Turkey initiated these airstrikes following operations of the militant Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) against Turkish bases in the mountains of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), in which nine Turkish soldiers were killed
- NES' political and military leaders state that Turkey's attacks amount to war crimes and deny Turkey's claims that the PKK stage their attacks from NES

November 2022

A week of Turkish airstrikes shatter NES' oil, gas and electricity infrastructure, with key targets including the **Odeh oil station, Zarba oil station, Gir Dahol oil station, Suwaydiyah gas and electricity station** and the **Saida oil station**. Turkey kills 16 civilians, including a journalist, and injures 33. Several **Asayish (Internal Security Forces) checkpoints** and a joint U.S.-YAT (SDF Anti-Terror Units) base are also hit.

Ekrem Suleyman, who works in the Jazira' Canton's electricity department, tells RIC: "these places which have been attacked, they are very well-known spots, and have been precisely targeted. The oil fields and the power stations. Where all the power of the region is produced: the generation sites. By targeting and collapsing these spots, these buildings, these fields, Turkey knows how to make instability here. In the region in general, if the [oil] fields and power stations are gone, this is a massive problem. It will cause displacement and force migration. It is also a big economic problem."

October 2023

Turkey again targets essential civilian infrastructure, cutting electricity and water supplies for 2 million people, killing 9 civilians and injuring 15. Again, **Odeh, Rimelan and Gir Dahol oil stations** are hit, plus **Suwaydiyah**. In addition, Turkey strikes the **electricity stations of Amude and Qamishlo cities**. Mass power outages cripple fuel production, triggering widespread shortages. Hospitals, bakeries and schools are left without electricity. Repair costs are estimated at upwards of \$50 million. Turkish warplanes bomb an **Asayish training academy**, killing 29 Asayish and injuring 28.

NES' leading NGO coordination body warns that repairing the damage quickly is the only way to avert a humanitarian catastrophe, stating that "the scale of damage far supersedes the capacity of the humanitarian community to sustain emergency life-saving service provision" and that "if significant civilian infrastructural damage is not addressed, no further escalation is required for the situation to worsen from dire to catastrophic."

December 2023

Over Christmas, Turkey re-strikes **Odeh and Saida oil stations**, and then proceeds to expand its strikes to target food packaging factories, warehouses, industrial sites, medical facilities and civilian homes. In addition, Turkey hits **a string of Asayish checkpoints** across NES. 11 civilians are killed and 25 injured.

Mamed Saydo, the co-chair of the Euphrates Canton's media office tells RIC: "Meshtanour clinic in Kobane was hit and destroyed. As part of the Euphrates Canton's health body, it sees thousands of cases and gives free medicines to the region's people. Turkey is committing war crimes, in front of the eyes of the whole world."

January 2024

Turkey begins a new round of airstrikes on NES' power infrastructure, damaging electricity and oil stations already battered from previous rounds of Turkish strikes, injuring 6 civilians. **Suwaydiyah gas and electricity station, Odeh, Zarba, Rimelan, and Gir Dahol oil stations, the electricity stations of Qamishlo, Amude, Kobane, Tirbespi and Ayn Issa** are the key targets. Turkey carries out 10 airstrikes on Suwaydiyah alone. Widespread water and electricity cuts are reported and the DAANES urges strict water rationing. Furthermore, Turkey bombs **numerous Asayish checkpoints** across the region. Grain storage warehouses, food production factories and civilian houses are also among the targets.

The SDF Media Center states that "these attacks have disrupted the delivery of essential services, including power, electricity, water, and other necessities, affecting hundreds of thousands of people" and claims that the attacks "constitute blatant and deliberate war crimes aimed at causing maximum harm to the lives of civilians, instilling fear, and inflicting suffering on their daily existence."

LATEST

-Turkey has conducted over 10 airstrikes on NES' crucial gas and electricity facility, Suwaydiyah, which produces around half of Jazira canton's electricity, plus supplies its emergency line, ensuring 24/7 power for essential services. Suwaydiyah feeds over 20 substations in the Jazira canton with electricity, supplying all downstream infrastructure including water stations, hospitals and bakeries. Furthermore, multiple oil pumping and refining stations in the Jazira canton rely on electricity from Suwaydiyah. It is also NES' only domestic gas bottling plant.

-Turkish targeting of the Rimelan power station threatens the electricity supply necessary for the functioning of oil and gas fields across the Jazira region, which provide fuel and gas for household, industrial, and commercial use across NES. DAANES states Turkish strikes on oil facilities has reduced

fuel supply to the energy, water, agriculture and heating sectors. Turkey is repeatedly targeting the same key power infrastructure and the scale of the damage greatly outweighs the capacity of the DAANES to restore essential services to civilians.

-With 7 key electricity stations rendered inoperable from Turkish strikes, water station operations are curtailed, impeding safe water access. Many water pumps in the region have no secondary generator to supply backup electricity when the general supply is cut. In Tirbespi, 13 of its 21 pumps have no secondary supply. In Amude this figure is 12 of 16 and in Qamishlo, 7 of 13. The DAANES has urged people to strictly ration their water. Without pumped water, civilians are forced to rely on prohibitively expensive trucked water.

-All of NES' major cities witness demonstrations as people take to the streets to protest Turkey's attacks.

-In Darbasiyah, a Russian patrol through the city was blocked after residents closed the road, demanding Russia – as a guarantor power in the region – intervene to stop Turkey's attacks.



Turkish airstrike on Asayish center, Qamishlo, 15.01.2024

COMMENT:

Aisha Nassir, the Euphrates Canton Energy Body co-chair told RIC: “[Turkey] has targeted the center of electricity station of Ayn Issa [on the 14th]. As a result, our 10MW transformer which was supping electricity to Ayn Issa and its countryside has been put out of service. The attack left the city and its

countryside without electricity. 4 hours later, Turkey targeted the stations of Kobane: two strikes on our 60MW transformer of the station for Kobane and its villages, which resulted in 360 villages left without electricity. As a result of the attacks, Kobane and Ayn Issa and their villages are without electricity and their transformer are now out of service. This is not something new from Turkey - aiming to worsen the life of people, through targeting the infrastructure which meet their everyday needs, such as water and electricity stations, warehouses, centers that provide medicines and treatment for the people. Also, Turkey does not target one region, it strikes cities across all over Rojava, targeting service infrastructure and facilities which meet people's everyday needs."

In an interview with local news agency North Press, Hassan Kocher, the deputy co-chair of the DAANES' Executive Council, lambasted the U.S. and Coalition's silence during Turkey's attacks, stating "we defeated ISIS in partnership with the Global Coalition, but they treat us as if we haven't fought ISIS. [...] Turkey primarily targets civilians while simultaneously engaging in propaganda within Turkey, falsely claiming that it targets military centers. However, the operation is completely the opposite. Those who lost their lives are civilians, and the targeted facilities are service and economic centers."

In a statement, the Syrian Democratic Council (SDC) said: "These attacks are considered as a blatant violation of the international law and a serious threat to peace and security in the region. The Council also strongly denounces the international community's silence regarding the heinous war crimes committed by the Turkish occupying entity against the people of North and East Syria, emphasizing that failure to address these crimes constitutes a serious neglect of human values and fundamental principles of justice and human rights."

FULL LIST OF AIRSTRIKES

12.01.2024

1. Odeh oil field, Tirbespi; 2. Zarba oil field, Tirbespi; 3. Bashout, Derik countryside.

13.01.2024

4. SAA point, Kharbesan, Kobane; 5. Gir Dahol oil facility, Tirbespi; 6. 'Agricultural Bank' site; 7. Kocherat countryside, Derik; 8. Gir Kendal, Derik; 9. Teqil Beqil, Derik.

14.01.2024

10. Ayn Issa power station; 11. Ayn Issa Asayish (Internal Security Forces); 12. LaFarge cement company site; 13. Civilian house, Girbetli village, Darbasiyah; 14. Supply center, Darbasiyah; 15. Kobane electricity station; 16. Car repair shop, Kobane; 17. Livestock barn, Kobane; 18. Wheat warehouse, Kobane; 19. Sponge factory, Darbasiyah; 20. SAA point, Shawargah, Shehba; 21. Amude electricity station; 22. Abdullah Derbas mill, Amude; 23. Qamishlo North electricity station; 24. Warehouse, Qamishlo; 25. Former driving school site, Qamishlo; 26. Dibana, Qamishlo; 27. Odeh oil field, Tirbespi; 28. Asayish checkpoint, Tirbespi; 29. Nerkiz company, Qamishlo; 30. Halva factory, Qamishlo; 31. Asayish checkpoint, Kafri Spi, Qamishlo; 32. Tirbespi electricity station; 33. Marika, Amude; 34. Tafla fuel refinery site, Derik.

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35. Qamishlo North electricity station; 36. Amude electricity station; 37. Darbasiyah electricity station; 38. Wedding hall, Darbasiyah; 39. Vicinity of DAANES courthouse, Qamishlo; 40. Oil field maintenance warehouse, Rimelan; 41. Power plant, Rimelan; 42. A site in Qamishlo's industrial neighbourhood; 43. A house near Qamishlo's Sony roundabout; 44. Odeh oil field, Tirbespi; 45. Tirbespi gas plant; 46. Asayish checkpoint, Shirk, Derik; 47. Gir Dahol oil field; 48. Building of Sadcop industrial company, Qamishlo; 49. Asayish center, Qamishlo; 50. Location close to Asayish center, Qamishlo; 51. Karbalat, Derik; 52. Tirbespi electricity station; 53. Rimelan gas station; 54. Suwaydiyah gas and electricity station, Tirbespi; 55. Gir Zero gas station, Derik.

CONTACT

Contact Rojava Information Center via WhatsApp on: +963 992 461 683 for photos, videos, comment and contact to interviewees on the ground.

The Rojava Information Center (RIC) is an independent media organization based in North and East Syria. The RIC is made up of local staff as well as volunteers from many countries across Europe and North America. Some of us have experience in journalism and media activism and came here to share our skills, and others joined bringing other skills and experiences to the team. There is a lack of clear and objective reporting on Rojava, and journalists are often unable to make contact with ordinary civilians and people on the ground. We set up the RIC to fill this gap, aiming to provide journalists, researchers and the general public with accurate, well-sourced, transparent information. We work in partnership with civil and political institutions, journalists, and media activists across the region to connect them with the people and information they need.