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Turkey Attacks Syrian Kurdish Villages, Killing 35 Civilians

By Jason Ditz August 28, 2016

After last week's invasion of northern Syria and the capture of the city of Jarabulus away from ISIS, Turkish officials were quick to insist that their real target was primarily the Kurds. They underscored this today with a flurry of attacks on a pair of Kurdish villages that left at least 35 civilians killed.

The villages of Jub al-Kousa and al-Amarna, just south of Jarabulus, are both Kurdish dominated villages, and according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, both were pounded by Turkish warplanes and artillery. 20 were killed in Jub al-Kousa and another 15 in Amarna. Scores were also reported wounded, so the toll may rise.

Despite the Observatory confirmation that all the slain were civilians, Turkey's official statement claimed they'd only killed 25 people total, and that all were members of the Kurdish YPG. The YPG only had very limited presences in either village, however, and indications are that they had already withdrawn some time before the attacks began.

Still, Turkey's notorious hostility toward all things Kurdish had many of the locals taking up arms to resist the takeover of their villages, and the Turkish-backed rebels, mostly the Islamist Ahrar al-Sham force, engaged in heavy fighting with the population before ultimately occupying both villages.

Turkish tanks were reported to be continuing southward after the villages fell, with their next targets the metro area around Manbij, with the Kurdish YPG and its allies captured, in a US-backed offensive that lasted over two months. The indications now are that Manbij won't be the end either, with intentions to continue to take territory even further south of that.