

SDF says it fought al-Qaeda linked rebel group near Afrin

by Wladimir van Wilgenburg - 24/01/2018 19:46



The SDF Media Center on Wednesday said they have carried out a special operation against Turkish troops and Turkish-backed rebels which included members of an al-Qaeda linked faction.

“Our forces conduct a special operation. In the framework of special and sudden operations that our forces are conducting, one of the SDF's groups carried out a special operation in the periphery of Deir Sam'a southeast of the Afrin canton neighbouring the Shirawa district against soldiers of the Turkish invasion army and terrorists of Jabhat al-Nusra concentrated there,” the SDF said.

“The operation began at midnight (24/1/2018) immediately as our combat groups surprised the concentrations of the Turkish soldiers and terrorists of Jabhat al-Nusra as they killed 8 members of them though we could not confirm if they were Turkish army soldiers or from members of Nusra terrorists,” the SDF added.

“And after the group carried out its mission, it withdrew from the periphery of the Qal'a and returned to its original place of concentration, without losses, while the Turkish army artillery began bombing areas randomly. At the same time, the villages of the Rajo district have been exposed since midnight to random artillery bombing,” the statement concluded.

The statement most likely refers to Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), also known as al-Qaeda in Syria, and formerly known as the al-Nusra front.

“Pray to God that this atheist party [PKK] be defeated and our Kurdish brothers be rid of their evil,” Sheikh Abdullah al-Muheisseni, the Saudi jihadi cleric based in Syria, said in a statement on Monday in a sign of support for Turkey.

Moreover, the HTS on Tuesday said it fought against the SDF in Qal'at Sam'an, which could indicate the SDF statement is true.

Nevertheless, Turkey [designated](#) both ISIS and the Nusra Front, now known as Jabhat Fateh al-Sham, as terrorist groups and acts in line with that policy, a Turkish foreign ministry source told Reuters in January 2016.