

# Price tag on Afrin occupation: Attacks against Turkey and its allies allegedly killed thousands

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The situation in Afrin, a Kurdish enclave in north-western Syria, hardly inspires a stable solution for the future. A destroyed statue of a mythical Kurdish hero is a reminder of the plunder of the city after its capture earlier this year by Arab and Turkoman rebel and jihadist groups backed by Turkey, from Kurdish forces.

Turkey argues it saved Afrin from terrorists and boasts of opening schools and hospitals. Residents are not exactly expressing gratitude towards Turkey's offensive. Referring to Islamist militants, "They've stolen so much," he says.

More than 100,000 civilians and scores of Kurdish fighters known as the People's Protection Units (YPG) fled Afrin when the Turkish army and its proxies swept in. The YPG drew back to save civilians from Turkey's airstrikes and vowed to retake control of the city.

Since then, The People's Protection Units (YPG) have been combating the Turkish army and its allies using guerilla tactics. The YPG attacks killed many Turkish soldiers and allied militia in Afrin, including a leader of the Islamist group Faylaq al-Sham, in an ongoing insurgency in northwestern Syria.

For example, in one single attack, The YPG claimed to have killed eight soldiers, including high-ranking officials.

"On July 11, our forces planted an explosive device on a military road used by the Turkish army in Basela village of Afrin's Shara district. Eight soldiers, including three high ranking officials (two lieutenants and a captain), were killed as result of the explosion," the YPG statement said.

"On July 13, our forces targeted a military vehicle carrying Turkish soldiers and Firqat al-Hamza mercenaries on their way to Afrin's Kimarah village. The operation resulted in the death of a Turkish terrorist and two mercenaries, while another Turkish terrorist was injured seriously," the YPG statement added.

The recent car blast in the Turkey-controlled city of Azaz also indicates the possibility of spreading of the attacks on all Turkey-controlled regions in Syria.

The explosion in Azaz was caused by a car bomb, said the war monitor, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, and hit a sit-in to demand new elections to the local council, the witness said.

The YPG claimed to have killed 2,527 mostly rebels and Turkish soldiers since the Turkish army attacked Afrin on January 20 until now.

Turkey has staged two incursions into northern Syria since 2016 in support of rebel and jihadist groups, leading to its control over a zone including cities of Afrin, Jarablus and Azaz, along with the border.

Ankara has brought together some of the rebel groups it backs there into a unified armed force, which it trains and pays. It also pays for some services inside the area it controls.