

# SDF commander: we will protect Deir ar-Zour from both IS and the regime

by Wladimir van Wilgenburg - 07/10/2017 13:49



KOBANI - Rojda Siyar, a senior commander in the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) told the news agency [Hawar News \(ANHA\)](#) that the regime has no strength to protect Deir ar-Zour again and that the people of Deir ar-Zour have lost their trust in the Syrian regime.

“In the four axes, the Syrian Democratic Forces are fighting with great resistance. So far, clashes are taking place between their forces and mercenaries, but Syria's democratic forces are defeating the mercenaries [ISIS] and advancing,” she said.

“Deir al-Zour is a strategic area for the whole of Syria because of the existence of oil and gas, water and agriculture and the richness of its territory. Therefore, Russia and the regime want to take over Deir al-Zour,” she said.

“But the regime does not have the strength and the ability to protect it again. The people of Deir al-Zour will not trust the regime again,” she said.

"The fighters of the Deir al-Zour Military Council under the banner of the Syrian Democratic Forces are from the areas of Deir al-Zour and want to liberate it from mercenaries," she said. "They do not want the regime to enter their territory, but to be a shield for their people and liberate their land and build their own administration under their protection," she said.

In the end she called on the people from Deir ar-Zour to join and support the Deir ar-Zour military council. She also called on women to join the council in order to protect themselves from ISIS injustice and the Syrian regime and administrate their areas by themselves.

Until now 27 women from Deir ar-Zour have joined the SDF forces.

According to Nicholas A Heras, a Middle East Fellow at the Center for a New American Security, "The SDF has a model for establishing rapport with the local population in areas it conquers from ISIS, which are local councils that are representative of the population in the area."

This grassroots approach separates it from the Syrian Regimes efforts to win the support of the population.

"This model is superior to the "reconciliation" model of the Assad government and its allies, which is essentially placing siege on a local community, and then allowing it a short-term autonomy until Assad aligned forces move into it," he told the Region.

The next question that confronts the SDF is whether this model will be successful as they move forward in Deir-Ezzor.

"While the SDF model has been successful in places with complex communal dynamics such as Manbij, it will still be challenged in eastern Syria, particularly Deir Azzour. In Deir Azzour, complex tribal politics and the presence of a network of ISIS sleeper cells waiting to be activated all await the SDF. That is why the SDF must bring into Deir Azzour a unified Deir Azzour Military Council made up of the different tribes, all organized with a coherent structure that is ready to support the local councils model that the SDF builds in the wake of ISIS," Heras told the Region.

"If the Deir Azzour Military Council is not stable from the first days the SDF is in Deir Azzour, and is riven with tribal in-fighting, disaster would be stalking the SDF efforts to hold eastern Syria," he added.

Many civilians from Deir Ar-Zour interviewed by the Region in a camp for displaced people in Ain al Issa, expressed their hopes that the SDF will control their areas.

"We'll go back if its controlled by SDF," Ali (24) a civilian from the countryside of Deir ar-Zour said. "But the regime is like ISIS."

The Syrian regime recently [claimed](#) to have entered the city of Mayadeen. But according to the news agency [Deir Ezzor 24](#) there are no signs yet that the regime is in the city.