

CIVILIANS UNDER ATTACK

**VIOLATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW DURING
TURKISH AND OAGs MILITARY OPERATIONS IN NORTH-EAST SYRIA**
(9 - 13 October 2019)



REPORT RELEASED ON OCTOBER 14, 2019



Humanitarian health personnel of the Kurdish Red Crescent (KRC), provide support to civilians in Qamishlo, October 2019

SITUATION OVERVIEW

This report provides consolidated data and information on the current humanitarian emergency in North East Syria (NES). Un Ponte Per strongly condemns all breaches of International Humanitarian Law by warring parties. In the morning of October 14, UPP expresses strong concern and stresses the importance of safe and unhindered access of humanitarian personnel to civilians in North East Syria. Humanitarian staff has been denied safe and unimpeded access to people in need due to shelling and airstrikes, or uncertainty regarding territorial control, following the withdrawal of US troops. This last episode has forced most expatriate NGOs staff to evacuate NES, and will affect humanitarian access. UPP endorses the UN call for immediate protection of the IDP camps, alongside guarantees of safe and unhindered passage for the IDPs to leave for areas of choice.

In the past week, the offensive of Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) caused **large scale humanitarian emergency** in an area already heavily affected by conflict and displacement. To date, the **number of verified civil casualties is at least 50, with 157 critically injured.**

On 12th October, Turkey-backed militia **executed** 9 civilians including Hevrin Khelelf, the Future Syria Party Secretary, together with her driver. On 13th of October a **civil convoy was attacked**, causing 11 victims and 74 injured, including at least 2 international press operators.

According to OCHA, **around 200,000 people have been displaced** due to the ongoing military operations. **Health facilities and ambulances have been repeatedly and intentionally targeted by the TAF** during the last five days, with some health personnel kidnapped.

The emergency response has been significantly hindered in its capacity to support victims. **The water plant in Allouk has been destroyed, affecting around 800 000 inhabitants** of the Al-Hasakeh region. At least **3 hospitals, 2 schools, 2 churches and a bakery** have been directly targeted by shelling.

Un Ponte Per | UPP – Humanitarian Organization – NGO

Headquarters: Via Angelo Poliziano n° 18-20-22, 00184 Rome – Italy

ph. +39 06 44 70 2906 - e-mail: info@unponteper.it - web site: www.unponteper.it

NGO: AICS Decree n° 2016/337/000281/5 – VAT n°: IT 04734481007

HIGHLIGHTS

In the period 9 - 13 October 2019 airstrikes on civilian areas were reported in all districts along the Turkish border, from Kobane to Al-Malikeyeh.

On 13 October:

- A Turkish airstrike **intentionally targeted a civilian convoy** heading to Ras-Al-Ain, causing **11 victims and 74 injured**, including 2 international press operators;
- **Two (2) ambulances** of the local administration's Health Department were attacked in the morning in Tell Abiad and **health workers were kidnapped**;
- In a night bombing on Asadiya village, south of Ras-Al-Ain, a **Trauma Stabilization Point** of the Health Department was hit and **three (3) health workers were heavily injured**;
- TAF took control of Ain Issa IDP camp; camp management and health workers were forced to leave the camp; tents and buildings were burnt by IDPs; **about 12 000 IDPs left and the camp is currently closed**. Those who escaped include 786 ISIS family members; unaccompanied minors were left behind and have later been evacuated by NGOs and UN.

On 12 October:

- Members of the Turkish-backed Syrian National Army reached the M4 road around Rajim Aanwa. Soldiers stopped the vehicles and **executed nine civilians**, among them Hevrin Khelelf, the Future Syria Party Secretary, together with her driver;
- The **Trauma Stabilization Point (TSP) of the Kurdish Red Crescent (KRC)** in Salhiyeh (south of Ras Al Ain) was targeted, causing several injured among medical personnel. **KRC ambulances have been systematically targeted** while trying to reach Ras Al Ain city, hindering their capacity to assist population in need;
- Two (2) **shepherds have been shot** in Berabita village, Al-Malikeyeh district, while working. One died, the second is seriously injured;
- Ain Al Arab/Kobane city was targeted causing mass displacement; the main hospital has been out of service for three hours after damages due to nearby shelling;
- One (1) **civilian was shot** by snipers in Qamishli;
- Al-Hasakeh Central Prison was hit by an explosion.

On 11 October:

- Several clashes were reported in Al Hol camp, in the annex, which hosts ISIS prisoner families;
- Approximately **5000 IDPs** hosted in Mabrouka camp in Ras al Ain district have been **evacuated** to other camps as fighting approached;
- Qamishli detention centre was targeted by TAF; as a result **five (5) ISIS members escaped**;
- A car bomb exploded on a Qamishli main road causing one **(1) victim and five (5) injured**;
- Civilian housing in Ein Diwar was attacked by TAF and Turkish-backed Syrian National Army, forcing inhabitants evacuation;
- The main **water station in Allouk, providing water supplies for more than 800.000 people**, was targeted and heavily damaged. The clash provoked an emergency in water supply for the whole area of Al-Hasakeh, also affecting significantly the activity of hospitals and other emergency aid facilities.

On 10 October:

- Two (2) airstrikes targeting a bridge 3 km south of Ain Issa were reported;
- A bakery was hit by shelling in Qamishli.

On 9 October:

- The **city of Tell Abiad** was heavily bombed, **several civilian casualties** have been reported after the random targeting in the city. The **hospital of Tell Abiad** is out of service since that day;
- in the city of Qamishli the **Christian neighbourhoods** of Bisheriya and Qanat Swiys have been intensively attacked and some civilian houses were struck, causing several casualties;
- The **hospital in Ras Al Ein** has been shelled and is still out of service;
- **Schools** have been targeted in Yabseh in Tell Abiad district.

Sources: *Kurdish Red Crescent (KRC), UNOCHA, UNHAP, WHO, NES Forum, INSO*

Un ponte per (UPP) is an international humanitarian and peacebuilding NGO, based in Italy. Originally named Un Ponte Per Baghdad (A Bridge to Baghdad), the association soon extended its operations to the Balkans, as well as other Middle East and Mediterranean countries, building bridges of solidarity with populations affected by war and armed conflicts.

UPP works to prevent violent conflicts, particularly in the Middle East, and address their effects on civilians, through awareness and advocacy campaigns, humanitarian programs, cultural exchange, human rights and peacebuilding projects and networking among civil society organizations.

Since 2014 UPP works in North-East Syria in the humanitarian response, in partnership with the Kurdish Red Crescent and other local civil society actors. UPP operates to enhance local capacities and rehabilitate the public health system, it runs a health emergency programme providing health service in IDP camps and to civilian affected population. UPP and partners further provide support to the local protection response and prevention efforts in Gender Based Violence and Psycho-Social Support, youth empowerment, provision of public services, waste management and environmental protection. Since 2011, UPP provides assistance to Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries.

For further information, please contact: info@unponteper.it

Website: www.unponteper.it

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/unponteper/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/UnPontePer>

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/unponteper>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/unponteper>