

- For the second consecutive week, levels of conflict in the northwest remained low. Turkey continued to send personnel and equipment into northwest Syria and established four new observation

Reduced levels of conflict continued in northwest Syria as the 5 March Turkish/Russian ceasefire

devices (IEDs) also detonated as a Turkish patrol passed Mhambal on 19 March, a first against a Turkish patrol according to ACLED data.

In the Turkish backed Euphrates Shield areas of Northern Aleppo, violence targeting civilians increased. In Basuta, the opposition's Hamza Division shot and killed a civilian at a checkpoint; in Afrin, an armed group kidnapped a civilian living in the Sinaa neighborhood; and in Jandaris, an armed group shot and killed an internally displaced person (IDP) travelling near the town. Two IEDs also detonated in residential areas in Afrin and Azaz.

Also, conflict levels remained elevated in the Tal Rifaat area for a second consecutive month. ACLED recorded 21 shelling exchanges in 18 areas<sup>5</sup>. Last month saw the highest recorded conflict levels in the enclave in over a year.

This week, three separate, coordinated armed attacks took place against GoS locations in the region.

On 16 March, gunmen attacked simultaneously multiple Air force Intelligence checkpoints in Alma and Sura towns in eastern Daraa Governorate. Two days later, in Nawa, in western Daraa Governorate, gunmen attacked multiple locations, including a political security branch and a military security building. On the same day, in nearby Jlein town, widespread armed clashes erupted between the 5<sup>th</sup> Division and local residents after GoS security units fired on three local reconciliation committee members and former opposition group commanders. The three-committee members had arrived to mediate between local residents who were protesting a newly established 5<sup>th</sup> division checkpoint in the Masakin Jlein area. GoS then shelled the town for hours before a secession of hostilities could be negotiated.

This marked the second such violent flareup in southern Syria. On 1 March,

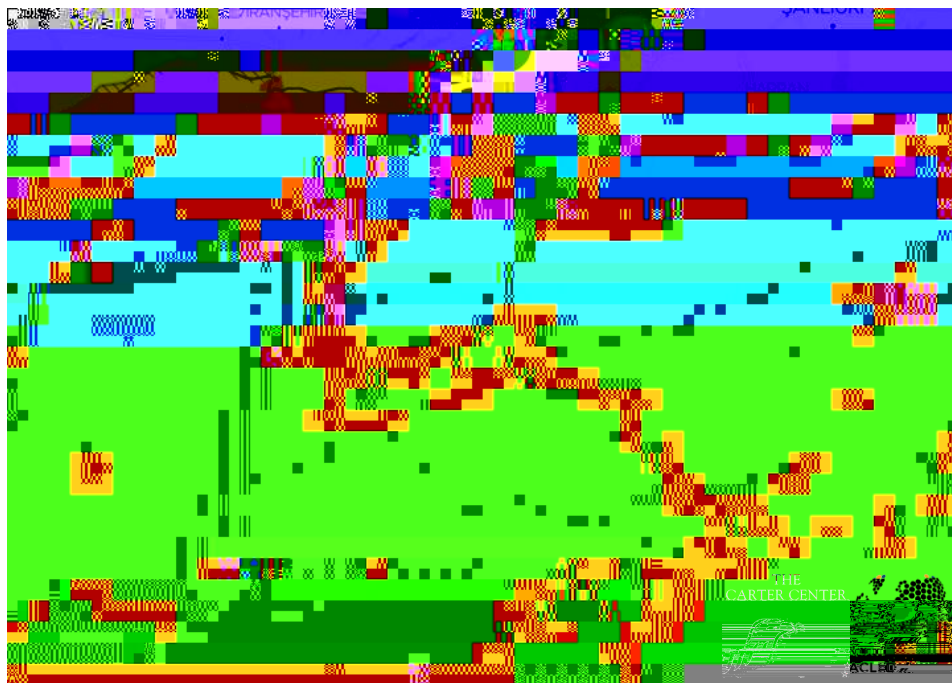
Attacks against infrastructure in the northeast continued this week. In Shadadah, an IED detonated near the traffic management building. In Taqba, a device detonated in the local fire station and, for the second consecutive week, an IED detonated targeting a Qatirji Oil Company truck on the Minkhar road near Karama. According to ACLED, in the last 12 months, 53% of all attacks against infrastructure in northeast Syria have occurred in three locations; in Raqqa City, the Omar Oil Field and Shiheil (Figure 4).<sup>6</sup>

Around Turkish occupied Operation Peace Spring areas, shelling and small arms fire exchanges between Turkish-backed groups and the joint largely Kurdish Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and GoS forces continued.<sup>7</sup> GoS sent reinforcements to Ain Issa town during the week. On 18 March, ACLED recorded 150 GoS military vehicles arriving in the town.

Inside Operation Peace Spring, Turkish-backed opposition armed groups protested in Ras al Ain and Tal Abiad on 17 March against their salaries not being paid by Turkey. The opposition groups burned tires and blocked traffic. These are the first protests against Turkey since Operation Peace Spring began. Turkish-backed opposition armed groups also continued looting in the Turkish occupied parts of NE Syria. They looted agricultural equipment and generators in Knihar, Drak, and al Said villages. They also looted public buildings in Um Ashba.

Attacks

who allegedly were responsible for the attack on the village.



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