

# Turkey's airstrikes destroy energy sources in NE Syria



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## **Turkey's airstrikes destroy energy sources in NE Syria**

In mid-January, Turkish warplanes destroyed the Sweidiya gas plant in countryside of Derik (al-Malikiyah), far northeastern Syria, which is the only gas plant and power-generating facility in northeastern Syria.

From 12 to 15 January, Turkey targeted a total of 81 sites in Northeast Syria held by the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES), including 54 sites by drones, and 27 sites by artillery and heavy weapons.

Turkish strikes amounted to 114, including 83 airstrikes by drones and warplanes in Hasakah Governorate and Kobani Region, and 31 strikes by heavy weapons near contact lines between areas controlled by the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and areas occupied by Turkey and its affiliated armed opposition factions, aka the Syrian National Army (SNA), in Tel Tamr, Ain Issa, Manbij and the northern countryside of Aleppo.

The majority of these sites are electricity and oil infrastructure in Hasakah and Kobani (26 sites), followed by residential areas (23 sites), posts of SDF and the Internal Security Forces of North and East Syria (Asayish) (16 sites), and the Syrian government forces (three sites).

Turkish strikes also targeted farmlands (six sites), industrial and production facilities (four sites), and private civilian facilities (three sites).

The greatest destruction was caused when Turkish warplanes targeted with nine airstrikes the power-generating turbines of Sweidiya gas plant and turbines of

the oil company in Rmelan, as well as power transformers and capacity transformer yards.<sup>1</sup>

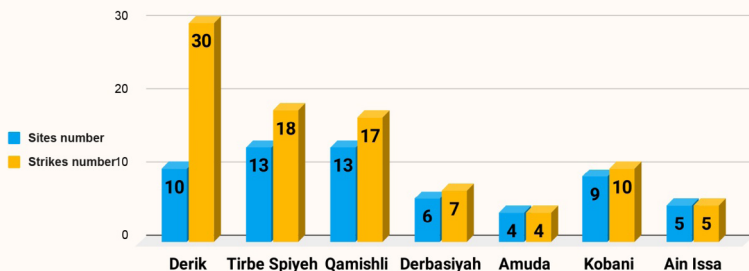


The entire area held by the AANES depends on the Sweidiya gas plant for the production of domestic gas. Life-saving facilities such as hospitals, bakeries, water wells also use electricity produced by the plant.

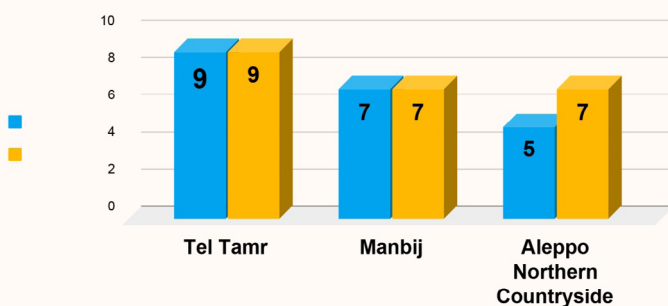
Power generators that supply villages and cities, which hospitals and bakeries, water wells also depend on now as the public electricity is out of service, need fuel derivatives to function. Fuel products were refined according to available local resources. The refineries and oil fields were also damaged by Turkish attacks.

<sup>1</sup> Photos show destruction of [Sweidiya gas plant](#) by Turkish airstrikes

### Turkish targeting of NE Syria with airstrikes



### Turkish targeting of NE Syria with heavy weapons



This report, issued by the Monitoring and Documentation Department of North Press Agency, sheds light on victims and casualties caused by the recent Turkish escalation at the beginning of 2024. It also highlights the long-term impact of the attacks on the population, if maintenance is not achieved or alternative sources of power are not found to produce cooking gas, electricity and fuel in the region.

Turkey's deliberate subjection of more than three million Syrians in Northeast Syria to devastating living conditions with the aim of their total or partial destruction, in addition to the killing of people for being Kurds or for living in a certain area, are considered a mass genocide according to Rome Statute adopted on July 17, 1998.<sup>2</sup>

In 2023, the region witnessed a shortage in domestic gas, oil derivatives for heating and transportation, as Turkey destroyed already vulnerable and limited resources of electricity and fuel production.

Frustration increased among the population, as Turkish airstrikes made their daily life intolerable and deprived them of the sense of stability and safety, which led to an increase in factors that contribute to immigrations from the country.

## **Destroyed electricity and oil sites**

The destruction of Sweidiya plant cut off power to the entire region, including vital facilities supplied by unrationed power lines. Turkey's destruction of substations in cities prevented the use of limited hours of public electricity generated in the Euphrates Dam.

Turkish airstrikes targeted substations in the towns and cities of Derbasiyah, Amuda, Qamishli, Tel Hamis, Tirbe Spiyeh (al-Qahtaniya), Tel Alo, Tawil, Tel Kocher, Rmelan, Derik, Kobani and Ain Issa.

Nine power stations were completely knocked out of service, leaving Derbasiyah, Amuda, Tirbe Spiyeh, Derik, Girke Lege, Chel Agha, Tel Hamis and Qamishli without electricity.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Rome [Statute](#)

<sup>3</sup> Energy office uncover the damages caused by [Turkish shelling](#)



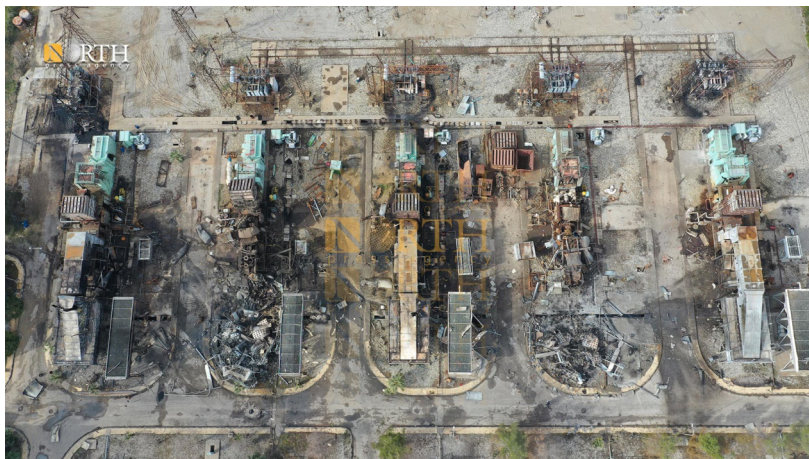
On Jan. 12, Turkish warplanes bombed Zarba and Awda oil fields in Tirbe Spiyeh.

On Jan. 13, Turkish warplanes bombed Awda site again, which is located between the villages of Gerdahol and Gir Sheran in countryside of Tirbe Spiyeh.

On Jan. 14, Turkey escalated airstrikes on power facilities, as its drones targeted Awda oil field once again, an oil refinery near the village of Gire Pire, and oil sites located near village of al-Khatuna in countryside of Tirbe Spiyeh.

Turkish drones targeted and destroyed power substations in Tirbe Spiyeh, Amuda, Qamishli, Kobani, Ain Issa.

On the same day, Turkish warplanes targeted the Taflah oil refinery in the countryside of Derik, and targeted the Sweidiya gas plant with drones strikes.



On Jan. 15, Turkish drones, once again, hit Awda oil field and other oil sites in countryside of Tirbe Spiyeh, in addition to power substations in Tirbe Spiyeh city, Derbasiyeh, Rmelan station and nearby warehouses for maintenance of oil wells. <sup>4</sup>

4 Damage in the Awda oil field as a result of [Turkish airstrikes](#)

On the same day, Turkish warplanes destroyed power substation in Sweidiya.

Through its recent strikes, Turkey has undermined the efforts of maintenance workshops to restore the power stations and oil sites back into service. It also bombed some of these sites once again while some employees were examining the damage and firefighters were attempting to extinguish the fires.<sup>5</sup>

## Casualties

The Turkish shelling that lasted for four days resulted in 13 casualties, two soldiers of the Syrian government forces were killed and 11 others were injured, including four from the government forces and seven civilians (including four men, two child and one woman).

On Jan. 14, a Turkish drone targeted a civilian's house, Khaled Hesso, in the village of Kerbetili in the south of Derbasiyah resulting in the injury of Ahlam Abdulrazaq Remo, 35, and her two sons Jan and Rojan Khaled Hesso.<sup>6</sup>

The strike caused destruction in all parts of the house and burned the house's furniture.<sup>7</sup>

The injured individuals refused to testify as they feared of being targeted again. However, Bilal Hesso, the house owner's brother, said, "We are civilians, not military personnel, to be targeted by Turkey. There are no military posts in our village."

5 Turkish airstrikes hits former location of Lafarge company again as [firefighters extinguish fire](#).

6 Turkish airstrikes injure family in [Syria's Hasakah](#)

7 Turkish strike destroys house in [Syria's Derbasiyah](#)



Turkey expanded its target area and marked all AANES-held areas as a military target, endangering the lives of civilians.<sup>8</sup>

During the Turkish escalation in 2023, many civilians, with no affiliation with any military parties, were subjected to strikes that targeted public<sup>9</sup> and private facilities that caused their death or injury.<sup>10</sup>

Civilian employees in power stations and oil facilities were also affected. Muhammad Khalil Ayoub was injured while working in the Sweidiya gas plant. He underwent an orthopedic surgery that included implanting fixation plates for the fragmented bones in his hand.<sup>11</sup>

Kabrin Farho, 32, an employee in the Electricity Directorate in Derbasiyeh, was attempting to extinguish a fire in an electricity substation that was caused by a Turkish airstrike. He was hit by shrapnel when Turkish warplanes bombed the substation a second time.

“When the Turkish planes bombed the station, the head of the Electricity Directorate and I rushed to extinguish the fire. When the planes bombed the station again, I was hit by shrapnel all over my body,” Farho said.

“I am not a military personnel. I am a civilian employee. This attack raises fear that we are likely to be targeted any moment. All the civilians in the region are threatened,” he added.<sup>12</sup>

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8 Turkey targets civilians’ houses, [workplaces in NE Syria](#)

9 Heartbroken parents mourn daughter loss in [Turkish strike on NE Syria](#)

10 Deadly Turkish strike claims life of [female worker in NE Syria](#)

11 Family of injured civilian extends [thanks to the doctors](#)

12 Residents in Syria’s Hasakah suffer due [Turkish attacks](#)

## Sweidiya gas plant

The facility includes electricity-generating turbines, and it is the only gas plant in northeastern Syria that produces domestic gas for 5 million people in the region and neighboring areas.

The plant used to provide 500 thousand cubic meter of clean gas every day to supply to the electricity-generating turbines, as well as producing 40 tons of solvents, according to the administration of the plant.

According to the Syrian Ministry of Electricity,<sup>13</sup> the plant was first operated in 1989 and consists of five generating units, with a 30 megawatt per hour for each. The units depend predominantly on gas.

In recent years, the units operated according to locally available resources, despite the expiry of the machines since 2000, as there are no alternatives to the plant, according to the AANES' Energy Office.

The previous Turkish attacks in October and December in 2023, severely damaged power and oil facilities, after Turkish authorities announced they will attack the infrastructure as a military target.<sup>14</sup>

The main cooling circuit in the gas plant was out of service due to a previous Turkish attack which halted production.<sup>15</sup>

On Jan. 14, Turkish drones targeted the Sweidiya gas plant with four strikes, putting it out of service. On the

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13 Information on [Sweidiya power facility](#)

14 [Turkish Foreign](#) Affairs Minister Hakan Fidan

15 AANES officials point out Turkish drone airstrikes on [service facilities](#)

next day, Jan. 15, the warplanes destroyed the power-generating station in Sweidiya.<sup>16</sup>

AANES officials in charge of operating Sweidiya plant announced that the plant was completely destroyed, and estimated the initial cost of repairs at one billion dollars.<sup>17</sup>

## Other facilities

The recent Turkish attacks also targeted six sites within farmlands, four industrial and production facilities run by the AANES, and three private civilian facilities.

On Jan. 14, a wheat mill, a poultry farm, a warehouse for agriculture seeds were targeted as well.<sup>18</sup>

## Darbas mill

Al-Khayrat Mill in Amuda, owned by Abdullah Darbas, 55, that was targeted by a Turkish drone.

Turkey targeted the mill with two strikes and put it out of service. The strikes also injured two workers, Hamad Kheir al-Sheikh, 45, was hit with shrapnel in his foot, and Hussein al-Husseino, 23, was hit by shrapnel in various parts of his body.<sup>19</sup>

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16 Aerial footage of main gas plant [destroyed by Turkish strike](#)

17 [Sweidiya gas plant destroyed](#) by Turkish strikes – AAENS official

18 Turkish airstrikes damage seed [warehouses in Kobani](#)

19 Owner of mill in NE Syria incurs [heavy losses due to Turkish strikes](#)

The attacks halted the production in the mill, as the Turkish drone hit the grinding section, and caused malfunctions in the fodder section, cylinders and sieves, eventually putting it out of service.

Turkey claimed responsibility for the attacks on this mill and other sites through a video published by its official media, claiming they were sites affiliated with Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK).

Darbas told North Press, that his workers and himself are civilians and are not affiliated with military or political parties. He pointed out that distributing wheat flour for the making of bread to other Syrian areas cannot be considered as a military job.<sup>20</sup>

The mill used to produce 50 tons of flour every day, and is considered one of the largest mills in Hasakah Governorate.

The owner estimates repairing the mill will cost \$60,000.

Hussein al-Husseino, a maintenance worker whose family resides in the al-Zuhour neighborhood in Hasakah, recalls being in the grinding section checking the machines when the rockets hit the facility and fire broke out. He says, "I reached the front door of the mill and fell to the ground because I could not walk."

A female relative of the injured worker helped pulled him into a car that took him to a hospital in Amuda and then to a hospital in Qamishli. He sustained shrapnel injuries to his hands, feet, abdomen, chest, and back.

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<sup>20</sup> Owner of mill in NE Syria incurs [heavy losses due to Turkish strikes](#)

## Poultry farm in Kobani

A Turkish drone targeted a poultry farm in the village of Sheikh Joban, 20 kilometers south of Kobani. The poultry farm was one of the projects of the AANES' Economy Board in Kobani.

Masoud Muhammad, supervisor of the poultry farm, said the Turkish drone targeted the egg production section.<sup>21</sup>

The poultry farm produced eggs for hatcheries, which distributed to 109 poultry farms in the countryside of Kobani.

Muhammad estimates the losses at \$60,000, as Turkish airstrikes destroyed heaters, automated cooling and feeding sections, and caused damage throughout the building.<sup>22</sup>

## Long-term impacts

Lack of electricity and fuel affected millions of people and deprived them of basic rights to life, such as electricity, fuel, safe water, health care and other fundamental services.<sup>23</sup>

Power was cut off to unrationed power lines used for vital facilities, such as hospitals, bakeries, water wells and other service centers. These facilities currently depend on private generators, which is difficult to secure sufficient quantities of fuel to operate.

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21 Damage in a poultry farm in Kobani caused by [Turkish air-strikes](#)

22 Turkish attacks cause massive losses to [poultry farm in Syria's Kobani](#)

23 Darkness in Kobani after Turkish airstrikes hit [the power station](#)

The days following the airstrikes witnessed a shortage in pumping water to water networks in the cities, as hundreds of water wells are not equipped with power generators to function.<sup>24</sup>

People were forced to turn to water tankers, which can be unclean, not to mention the high prices.<sup>25</sup>

The recent destruction of the Sweidiya facility exacerbated the already deteriorating living conditions more than ever, as fuel, cooking gas, and public electricity were not available anymore.

Some bakeries and health facilities were impacted and lacked power, after the outage of vital power line from Sweidiya. They now depend on generators without sufficient amounts of fuel to operate continuously.

Transportation of life-saving materials to these facilities was also affected, in addition to an increase in prices of essential goods due to the shortage of fuel for transportation trucks.

The damage cannot be addressed with humanitarian response only, according to a statement by NES NGO forum.<sup>26</sup>

Un Ponte Per (UPP) said that its employees in northeastern Syria reported they are without power and water and face restriction of movement as Turkish airstrikes targeted nine out of 10 vital services in 11 main cities and 2700 villages.

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24 AANES warns of water cutoff due to [Turkish airstrikes in NE Syria](#)

25 Turkish airstrikes cause severe [water crisis in NE Syria](#)

26 NGOs say Turkish strikes destroyed [civilian infrastructure in NE Syria](#)

The organization added that the humanitarian response alone is not enough to address the increasing damage.<sup>27</sup>

Maintenance efforts and restoration of some services, such as the cooking gas filling unit in Sweidiya, face obstacles such as securing and bringing spare parts into the region amid the conflict and sanctions imposed on the country.

Abeer Khaled, co-chair of AANES' Fuel Directorate, said they will try import cooking gas but it will cost high prices.<sup>28</sup>

Additionally, Agid Abdulmajid, director of the Sweidiya gas plant, also pointed out that the domestic gas cylinders will be sold according to the cost of import.

Local distributors of domestic gas charged 10\$ (150,000 Syrian pounds (SYP) in advance for filling one cylinder, instead of its former subsidized price which was (8000 SYP, which equals about \$0,50).

In September 2023, people already protested the AANES' increasing of two types of diesel, which means the new increased prices will cause major living problems for families.<sup>29</sup>

## Impact of conflicts

Even though Turkey signed two ceasefire agreement with Russia and U.S., following its military operation dubbed "Peace Spring" in October 2019, Turkey continues its

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27 An appeal of ["un ponte per" organization](#)

28 AANES to import gas to meet [NE Syria's energy needs](#)

29 People in North Syria protest [raising fuel prices](#)



attacks using artillery, drones and warplanes against Northeast Syria.

The Turkish Ministry of Defense announced attacking on Jan. 13, 14, and 15, on 72 sites in northern Iraq and northern Syria, claiming they were conducted in response to PKK attacks on Turkish soldiers in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI).<sup>30</sup>

The Turkish Ministry of Defense regards the targeted areas in Syria an extension of areas in northern Iraq, where the PKK attacked Turkish soldiers.

The majority of the sites that Turkey declared their destruction were power, fuel facilities, mills and others used for the production of essential food.

Turkey argues that its attacks are legal under Article 51 of United Nations Charter, that stipulates “Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations”.

However, the targeted sites by Turkish strikes highlight Turkey’s focus on Kurdish-majority areas, which reflect its racist motives on the basis of ethnic discrimination, which is contrary to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination ratified by Turkey.

Using the word “Irhabistan” (a manipulated word to mean the country of terrorism) by the Turkish presidency, to refer to KRI and AANES in Syria, confirms Turkey’s

<sup>30</sup> Turkey’s statements on its attacks on Jan. 13-14-15  
<https://www.msb.gov.tr/SlaytHaber/7b9df9ceb11042a5b60bf-749f6a9b2bf> <https://www.msb.gov.tr/SlaytHaber/ba798e1e24c14ed2882ce0823134f05c> <https://www.msb.gov.tr/SlaytHaber/5d835ca89ca54a3784810f85994bba31>

hostility to all Kurdish-majority areas in Iraq and Syria and regards them as military targets.<sup>31</sup>

The destructive attacks demonstrate Turkey's deliberate attempts to subject the people of these areas to worsening living conditions. This falls under the definition of mass genocide according to the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (CPPCG), adopted by the UN General Assembly.

Turkey caused large-scale destruction to properties inside Syria under the pretext of protecting "Turkish national security." It intentionally targeted civilians who are not involved in fighting, which might amount to a war crime according to breaches of the August 12, 1949 Geneva Convention.

Neither substations nor the power-generating Sweidiya gas plant, can be considered funding sources to any military or political party, as its destruction only affected more than three million people in addition to the quantities of fuel and gas that used to be sent to adjacent areas. The AANES does not charge people for the public electricity, and the prices of gas and bread are less than the production cost.

The Syrian government must file a complaint in order to hold Turkey, who endorsed on Rome Statute, accountable. The Syrian government has not protested yet, until the time of writing this report, Turkey's targeting of these infrastructure, even though there are service facilities run by the Syrian government in the targeted areas, including electricity and water facilities.<sup>32</sup>

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31 Turkey's comments on [terrorism](#)

32 A statement by government [company of electricity](#)

The Turkish strikes in mid-January included military and security posts of the government forces and resulted in casualties.<sup>33</sup>

The reason for the Syrian government for not protesting is the lack of a political agreement with the AANES in areas held by the SDF, which explains the absence of an AANES representative within the Syrian government.

Human Rights Watch (HRW) said in its 2024 report, the human rights challenges of 2023 are not only related to human rights suppression and wartime atrocities but also to selective government outrage and transactional diplomacy that carried profound costs for the rights of those not in on the deal.<sup>34</sup>

## Recommendations

1- The international community must push Turkey diplomatically, to uphold international laws and to stop systematic attacks on Northeast Syria.

2- Humanitarian organizations must provide urgent aid to the affected population by Turkish attacks, including alternative energy, daily necessities, and essential services.

3- International community and organizations must provide technical and financial support to rebuild the damaged facilities, and to support maintenance efforts for the sustainability of the infrastructure.

4- An international, independent and transparent investigation on Turkey's attacks and its violation of international humanitarian law must be conducted,

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33 Burial of Syrian soldiers killed in [Turkish airstrikes in Qamishli](#)

34 Human Rights Watch (HRW) [2024 report](#)

to hold accountable those responsible for committing violations of human rights and crime wars.

5- The international community must promote international protection of civilians in affected areas, and assure their safety in unjustified military attacks.

6- All parties to the Syrian conflict must commit to the protection of civilians and prevent targeting civilian objects in accordance with international humanitarian law and human rights.

7- Arab and international bodies must push the parties to the conflict to dialogue as a path to solution, and spare Syrians from further war.

**MONITORING AND DOCUMENTATION DEPARTMENT**

