In recent years, Syria, unfortunately, has increasingly become an arena of confrontation between many countries, primarily through the fault of the US, Israel and Turkey.

As a result of Washington’s blatant neo-colonial approach to Syria, US military personnel, that has been illegally deployed to the country in violation of all international norms (as has been repeatedly stated by Syrian officials, including from the UN podium) and with the support of thousands of US PMCs, ensures that Washington secures its gains on the ground. This is particularly evident from the incessant plundering of the country, from the continuous theft of its energy resources, with historic works of art and all sorts of goods being stolen from the people of Syria. In essence, US activities here are a smuggling business seized by Washington from ISIS (a terrorist group banned in Russia), which exacerbates the situation in the war-torn region. Meanwhile, the US military continues to be responsible for the deaths of Syrian civilians, most recently in a so-called “counter-terrorism operation” conducted by the Pentagon on February 2 near the town of Atme in Syria’s Idlib province, which killed six children and four women.

Israel too is pursuing an aggressive policy by killing innocent civilians in Syria and targeting pro-Iranian forces in the SAR. Israeli aircraft regularly strike targets inside Syria without entering the SAR’s airspace, mainly operating from Lebanon, which violates international norms, or from the Mediterranean Sea. In the last two years alone, the IDF has launched around a hundred missile attacks on Syrian territory and air strikes, killing dozens of people and
causing significant damage to Syria. Such barbaric acts go on despite repeated statements to the UN by the official Syrian authorities, as well as proposals made by Moscow to all the countries concerned to hold meetings and discussions to prevent relations from escalating into armed conflicts and civilian deaths. However, these calls and appeals were never heeded in Tel Aviv.

Such provocative tactics by Tel Aviv could lead to a serious escalation of the situation at any time, as the Syrian Foreign Ministry and authorities have repeatedly stated before, stressing that the country could use “all legitimate means” to respond to Israeli strikes on its territory.

Turkey, which has effectively declared war on the Syrian Kurds, is acting in a similarly aggressive manner in Syria. This is how Mazloum Abdi, commander of the Syrian Democratic Forces, said in his comments on the recent airstrikes by the Turkish air force on the Syrian Kurds in his Twitter account on February 1: “Turkish bombardment of Ain Diwar and Derik has resulted in the martyrdom of civilians and fighters and also hit public infrastructure, including a water dam and power station. This attack amounts to a declaration of war, endangers civilians, and undermines our fight against ISIS [an organization banned in Russia] ... With the rising threat of terrorism, our Coalition partners bear a large part of the responsibility to prevent such Turkish attacks.” Ankara considers the People’s Self-Defense Units (YPG), part of the Syrian Democratic Forces, an offshoot of the Kurdistan Workers’ Party, recognized as a terrorist organization in Turkey.

Days earlier, on February 3, Turkish army shelled Kurdish People’s Self-Defense Forces (PSDF) positions near the city of Manbij in northern Syria, firing 19 shells into the village of Sheikh al-Nasir, with another 19 shells exploding in al-Sayyada and al-Yalanli. And before that, in late January, the Turkish air force struck Kurdish militia lines in northern Aleppo and the neighboring provinces of Raqqa and Hassakeh. Four Kurds were killed in a massive attack on an area where a local power plant is located. The command of the Syrian Democratic Forces coalition, the core of which is the PSDF, has accused Turkey of deliberately fomenting new conflict in the Kurdish-controlled northern regions.

Meanwhile, the Turkish army and the Syrian opposition are regularly shelling population centers in the north of Hassakeh province. One such shelling occurred on January 13, which, according to the Syrian Arab News Agency SANA, hit the villages of Umm Al-Khair near Abu Rasein and Al-Abush close to the town of Tell Tamer. Because of the shelling, locals were forced to flee their homes at night as the shelling caused serious damage.

The uneasy situation manifests itself in southern Idlib, where there is a periodic surge of militants, including those actively supported by Turkish forces. In early January, for example, the militants launched an offensive across virtually all of southern Idlib. There were rocket and mortar attacks on Syrian positions near Kafr Nabl, Maaret al-Numan and Malaja. Also, mobile missiles fired by militants exploded behind the Syrian army lines in the area of Beit Ahmad Qaddour. The news of the major operation is confirmed by fighters from the so-called “Syrian opposition” themselves, including from the Ankara-backed “Free Syrian Army.”

On February 9, a Turkish drone fatally struck two civilian vehicles travelling on the Derbessia-Amuda highway near the village of Bahira. Missiles disrupted the electricity supply to 40 Kurdish settlements near the Syrian-Turkish border in Hassakeh province, one vehicle carrying adults and children was blown up and the other was thrown into a ditch. There were casualties, including one child, as well as wounded.

In this context, the Russian Foreign Ministry’s statements that Russia “systematically and resolutely opposes attempts to turn Syria into a scene of armed confrontation between third countries” sound more relevant than ever. Such actions on the territory of Syria by third countries and their attacks on Syrian civilian and military targets result in economic losses for the SAR, reduce the combat capabilities of the Arab Republic and have a negative impact on the effectiveness of the efforts of the Syrians and their allies to eliminate the presence of terrorists in the country. For these reasons, these actions by third countries in Syria must be stopped.

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