



Situation in Syria and Iraq Following Turkey's Invasion of Syria

QSD on 24 October 2019

On 24 October 2019, Lord McConnell of Glenscorrodale (Labour) is due to ask Her Majesty's Government "what assessment they have made of the situation in Syria and Iraq following Turkey's invasion of Syria".

Summary

- On 6 October 2019, [a statement from the US White House](#) said that the US president, Donald Trump, had spoken with the Turkish president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. It said that Turkey would be beginning a "long-planned" military operation in Northern Syria. US armed forces would not "support or be involved" in the operation and they would "no longer be in the immediate area". The statement also said that Turkey would now be responsible for all ISIS fighters captured over the past two years.
- Turkey's military operation in Northern Syria [began on 9 October 2019 as part of "Operation Peace Spring"](#). Mr Erdoğan said the operation was targeted against the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party), the YPG (People's Protection Units) and ISIS. Its aim was to prevent the creation of a "terror corridor" across Turkey's southern border, neutralise terror threats to Turkey and to establish a safe zone that would "facilitate return of Syrian refugees to their homes".
- On 14 October 2019, Donald Trump [announced that he would issue an executive order imposing sanctions](#) "against current and former officials" in the Turkish government, and "any persons contributing to Turkey's destabilizing actions in northeast Syria".
- On 15 October 2019, the Foreign Secretary, Dominic Raab, [made a statement to the House of Commons](#) condemning Turkey's military action. Mr Raab stated that the UK would be keeping its defence exports to Turkey under continuous review. He explained that the UK would not grant further export licences to Turkey "for items that might be used in military operations in Syria [...] while we conduct that review".
- [On 17 October 2019, the US and Turkey reached agreement on a ceasefire in the region.](#) The UK Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, [spoke with President Erdoğan on 20 October 2019](#). Mr Johnson welcomed the agreement and said that the temporary suspension in fighting was a step in the right direction although concern remained about the military operation. The Prime Minister and the Turkish President agreed to try to meet alongside French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel to discuss the current situation.

Charley Coleman | 21 October 2019

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Further Information

- The White House, [‘The United States and Turkey Agree to Ceasefire in Northeast Syria’](#), 17 October 2019

Press release by the White House that the US and Turkey had agreed a ceasefire in the region. Also included is a joint statement by the US and Turkey on reaching the agreement.

- Republic of Turkey’s Directorate of Communications, [‘Operation Peace Spring Starts in N Syria: Erdoğan’](#), 9 October 2019, and [‘Turkey Not Worried Over Sanctions: Erdoğan’](#), 16 October 2019

Statements published by the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey’s Directorate of Communications on the country’s military operation in northern Syria, including a statement made at the start and a statement by the Turkish President in response to sanctions imposed upon it.

- [Statement by the Foreign Secretary, Dominic Raab, on ‘Turkish Incursion into Northern Syria’](#), HC Hansard, 15 October 2019, cols 127–44; [statement repeated in the House of Lords](#), HL Hansard, 15 October 2019, cols 24–8

Statement made by the Foreign Secretary in the House of Commons including follow-ups. The repeated statement and follow-up questions in the House of Lords are also included.

- The White House, [‘Statement from President Donald J Trump Regarding Turkey’s Actions in Northeast Syria’](#), 14 October 2019

Statement by the US president announcing sanctions against Turkey.

- House of Commons Library, [Syria: US Withdrawal and Turkish Incursion](#), 17 October 2019

House of Commons Library briefing which sets out background information on Turkey’s military operation in northern Syria, including a discussion of the role of the Kurds in the defeat of ISIS in the region.

Parliamentary Debate, Statements and Questions

- House of Commons, [‘Written Question: Syria: Military Intervention’](#), 17 October 2019, 304
- House of Commons, [‘Written Question: Syria: Military Intervention’](#), 17 October 2019, 291
- House of Commons, [‘Written Question: Terrorism’](#), 17 October 2019, 292

Press Articles and Comment

- Michael Safi, '[Kurdish Fighters Leave Syrian Border Town, Giving Turkey Control](#)', *Guardian*, 20 October 2019
- BBC News, '[US Troops Leaving Syria Will Go to Iraq, Says Pentagon Chief](#)', 20 October 2019
- Bethan McKernan and Julian Borger, '[Pence and Erdoğan Agree on Ceasefire Plan but Kurds Reject 'Occupation'](#)', *Guardian*, 17 October 2019
- Roland Oliphant, '[Donald Trump Accused of Undermining US Efforts to Broker Ceasefire Between Turkey and Kurds](#)', *Telegraph*, 16 October 2019
- BBC News, '[Turkey v Syria's Kurds: The Short, Medium and Long Story](#)', 14 October 2019