

Turkey's Military Intervention against PYD (*Partiya Yekiti A Demokratik*) in the Syrian Region

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Abstract

This paper aims to analyze how Turkey's military intervention against the PYD group in Syria. As the effect of the Arab Spring, Syria has been encountering a civil war that involves not only state actors but also non-state actors such as the YPG/PYD group or the Democratic Union Party to gain recognition and political sovereignty for Kurdish groups in Syria. The YPG/PYD is an affiliate of the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) in Turkey, which is considered a terrorist group by the government because of its actions opposed government policies since the independence of modern Turkey era. In the midst of political instability in Syria, the Turkish government believes that the political nature and military power of the PKK and its allies in the region can jeopardize Turkey's security and politic stability, which geographically borders Syria. This research uses descriptive qualitative method through literature review method. Through J.G. Starke and Anthony F. Lang's theory of intervention and Barry Buzan's National Interest, the author found that Turkey's intervention was due to the losses it would incur if the PYG/PYD's ability to strengthen Kurdish groups in Syria.

Keywords

intervensi; kurdi; PYD;
PKK; Suriah; Turki



I. Introduction

An estimated more than 40 million population today (Kurdish Institute of Paris, 2017), the Kurds are still one of the largest ethnic groups (nations) in the world without it's own independent state. They have lived for thousands years in an area referred to as the Kurdistan region, straddling the borders of Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria and Southwest Asia. The diaspora of this ethnic is inseparable from the struggle to form a state when it was given the opportunity through the treaty of Sèvres at the end of World War I (1920) by the Ottoman Empire, which was not ratified by Turkish nationalists. Conversely, the renewal of the 'Lausanne' peace treaty as a means of recognizing Turkey's sovereignty after the war of independence seemed to bury the hopes of ethnic Kurds with the formation of the modern Turkish Republic under it first President Mustafa Kemal Attaturk.

Since then, they have been an unprotected minority and an actor in the Middle East. But the situation and the way they are treated varies from country to country, where they are still in diaspora and scattered as 8.1 million are in Iran, 5.5 million are in Iraq, 14.7 million live in Turkey and 1.7 in Syria (cfr.org, 2017). Thus, they have to adapt to the specific scenario of each host country and the fate of this diaspora certainly attracts the attention of the international community. Oppression, violence, discrimination and ethnic cleansing as pressure from the ruling regime are policies that cannot be avoided by groups in Turkey, Iran, Iraq or Syria (Sirwan, 2019). The dilemma of achieving the goal of

independence or maintaining the autonomy they claim called Kurdistan in the Middle East region in particular, appears to be a security threat to the countries involved.

In Turkey, where the Kurdish community has historically comprised more than 25 percent of the population, they have been discriminated against and dubbed "Mountain Turks" by the rest of the population despite their human rights and their place in the political sphere.

After the Turkish military coup in the 1980s, the civilian government passed an anti-terror law that became the legal basis for repressive reactions by the Turkish army. However, the existence of the PKK (further known as *Koma Civaken Kurdistan* - or *Kurdistan Union Community KCK*) in Turkish politics was strengthened by Kurdish parties beyond the borders of Turkey on a regional scale in the Middle East, such as in Iraq *Partiya Caseriy a Demokratik a Kurdistan* (PCDK), then in Iran; *Partiya Jiyana Azad a Kurdistan* (PJAK), and in Syria *Partiya Yekiti a Demokratik* (PYD) (White, 2015, pp. 36-37). The KCK being an advocacy organization for the Kurdish community that was initiated in 1994, has a structure as an affiliate of the parties of the Kurdish organizations in the Kurdistan region, which has subdivisions of fronts namely ideological, political, social, military and women's fronts.

Seeing that many PKK affiliates are strong and increasingly active in political activities and have strong ties with those involved in Syria, the Turkish government sees that the threats it faces are not only in its domestic environment but from the external environment. It cannot be denied that the reality of sharing a 900-kilometer border with Syria has made Turkey one of the main destinations for refugees from the Syrian conflict which can trigger other adverse conditions for national threats. In 2014, Hurriyet reported that up to that time, 45,000 Syrian Kurds had crossed the border and entered Turkey from eight entrances to save themselves from ISIS (Hürriyet.com, 2014). Based on the background of the problem above, the question raised in this research is how Turkey's military intervention against the PYD group in Syria and its influence on international attitudes.

II. Review of Literature

As an analytical instrument, the author uses the theory developed by J.G. Starke in his book *Introduction to International Law* which states that there are three typologies in seeing a country's intervention against another country, namely:

1. Internal Intervention, which is an intervention by a country in the domestic affairs of another country.
2. External Intervention, which is an intervention by a country in the foreign affairs of another country.
3. Punitive Intervention is a form of reprisal intervention, which is generally not in the form of war, for the losses suffered by the state (Starke, 1988, p.136-137). This intervention was used by the Turkish government as a retaliation for the losses suffered after the actions carried out by the PKK in the country. These three categories basically justify intervention for a sovereign state. Then more specifically Anthony F. Lang states that the characteristics of this intervention can be defined as the use of military force beyond national borders to change the internal affairs of a country that has violated international law or norms. This intervention is a new form of a desire to punish wrongdoers or criminals, whether an individual leader or the entire population of a country (Lang, F. 2005, p.50-70).

III. Research Method

The research method used in this research is qualitative to understand and interpret (to interpret) a social, political and cultural behavior or interaction (Creswell, 2012, p.284). Qualitative research uses observation to find or understand a phenomenon in a particular context. The researcher is a very important instrument to capture meaning, interaction and value. Descriptive and analytical research methods are used by the author to describe, provide a description and overview of Turkey's intervention in Syria.

IV. Discussion

4.1 Ethnic Kurds Under Politic and Governance in Syria

Initially, the Kurdish tribes in the Syrian Arab Republic had an extensive heritage of cultural activities, but they were less successfully organized and developed in the political, military and economic spheres compared to Kurdish tribes in other neighboring countries. The borders drawn in the Middle East after the First World War led to divisions among the Kurds in the region; fewer Kurds remained within the borders of Syria under the French mandate than in Iraq, Iran and Turkey (Halhalli, 2018, p.35-36). On the map of modern Syria, ethnic Kurds fall under Syrian sovereignty and predominantly inhabit Northeast Syria. Some of these people are immigrants who crossed the Syrian border coming from Turkey to escape the oppression of their government, after the failure of the Kurdish Revolution led by Sheikh Said in 1925 (Hasan, 2020, p.1).

After the establishment of the Syrian Arab Republic, due to the state's policy of discouraging/resisting the strengthening of sub-identities, the Kurds in Syria did not gain power in the political arena. Between 1946 and 1957, with undesirable developments in other parts of the Middle East, the Kurds did not have an organization defending Kurdish rights in Syria either. Therefore, the Syrian government integrated the Kurdish region, which is a distinctive group in terms of ethnicity and language, in addition to the areas bordering Turkey and Iraq, into several cities in other parts of the country especially important places such as Damascus and Aleppo-economically, culturally and politically. Subsequently, ethnic Kurds have strong participation in political parties. They occupy various positions, from politicians, government officials to high-ranking military officers. The image of the Kurds was well regarded and respected in the Syrian government, and even president Husni al-Zaim (in office since 1949) was a Kurd (Ziadeh, 2009). In the field of education and religion, many of the Clerics and ,Muftis are also of Kurdish origin.

Changes in Syria's internal political and governance situation over the years have had a strong impact on the position of Kurdish groups. The Syrian government became increasingly authoritarian as the Ba'ath party came to power, led by Hafez Al-Assad for 30 years (1970 - 2000). The weak and fragmented Kurdish political parties operated with limited intervention from the government when Hafez was in power as they were considered a threat.

Ethnic Kurds felt increasing inequality and discrimination at the beginning of Hafez's tenure, as did the Kurdish population in Turkey. In the last decade, however, the position of Syrian Kurds as players in Syrian politics has begun to be taken into account. As a group and ethnicity divided into four states, all of them have historical connections that can explain their respective political achievements, especially in this case between the relationship between Syrian Kurds and Kurds in Turkey.

In Syrian politics, there were 71 Kurdish-affiliated political parties in Syria from 1957 to 2014 (Al-Kati, 2019). The most dominant and popular party is the *Partiya Yekitiya*

Democrat (PYD) or Democratic Union Party. The formation of the PYD has a history and close links with the Kurdish party in Turkey, *Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê* (PKK). It should be noted that the Syrian president, Hafez Al-Assad, provided a political and military base in 1980 to PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan and his supporters. The aim was for the PKK to fight Turkey, an enemy of Syria (Bengio, 2017) In this 'cooperation', the PKK then strengthened relations with Kurds in Syria and trained together.

The clash of ethnic brothers separated by national borders ended after the Adana Agreement made by Syria and Turkey, and Öcalan and the PKK left Syria. The PKK was later put on the terrorist list by Turkey. Two decades later, the PKK's influence over the Kurds in Syria remains intact, even strengthened by the formation of the PYD in 2004. In 2005, Bashar al-Assad succeeded his father Hafez al-Assad as president. Since the beginning of his reign, President Bashar al-Assad has discouraged the naturalization of Syrian Kurds (KurdsWatch, 2010). The Syrian regime banned Kurds from: building private schools, teaching in Kurdish, naming their children and businesses with Kurdish names and printing books in Kurdish. Bashar al-Assad's worst policy was the denial of Syrian citizenship to 300,000 Kurds, depriving them of civil rights (Noi, 2012). However, the Kurdish influence in Syria, especially in the Northeast, is not easily eradicated.

4.2 The Kurds and Civil War in Syria

The Kurdish political movement through the PYD cannot be separated from the Syrian civil war. The upheaval that began with the Arab Spring in Tunisia still makes Syria a battleground for various parties with their own interests. The PYD first joined the anti-Assad uprising in April 2011 during the Arab Spring. (Aziz, 2020). The PYD emerged as the most influential Kurdish party force in 2011 compared to other Kurdish parties. The PYD has an effective military force consisting of the People's Protection Units (YPG) and the women's military group Women's Protection Units (YPJ) established in 2012, as well as other parties such as the Democratic Union Party, Kurdish Left Party in Syria, Syria Kurdish Democratic Party, Kurdistan Liberal Union Party, Green Party of Kurdistan, Communist Party of Kurdistan and Kurdish Democratic Peace Party in Syria.

The dynamics of the conflict in Syria provide an opportunity for the Syrian Kurds to fight for their rights and dreams of autonomy. Uprisings and protests against Bashar Al-Assad's regime caused considerable turmoil between the government and civil society. Assad deployed his military forces to points that became the location of the uprising. In July 2012, Assad withdrew his military forces and focused on protecting the areas controlled by the government. The PYD with its military forces seized the opportunity after Assad's army left northern Syria to take over the Kurdish-majority areas without much resistance. This is why the PYD and YPG are like the third group in the conflict between the regime and the opposition (Aziz, 2020). They inhabit the northern and northeastern regions of Syria (such as Afrin, Kobane and Jazira) and control almost the entire Turkish-Syrian border and want the region as an autonomous region for Syrian Kurds and are not asking for secession.

In 2014, non-state actor ISIS entered the complex Syrian conflict by annexing the city of Raqqa as its de facto capital. In 2015, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) was formed, consisting of Kurdish and Arab militias. Led by Kurds, the YPG evolved over time into the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF): a multi-ethnic, multi-religious force in which all indigenous peoples of the region are represented. Arabs, Assyrians, Armenians, Yezidis, Circassians and Turkmen have fought alongside the Kurds to defend their homeland. By 2019, when the SDF had liberated all of Syria from ISIS control, there were about 100,000 fighters (including SDF and Internal Security Forces) under the leadership

of SDF commander Mazlum Abdi, a Syrian Kurd and former Kurdistan Worker. The SDF is fighting ISIS with the support of weapons and military aid from the United States (Holmes, 2020). The United States has poured money into equipment, supplies, training and benefits for its strategic partner in Syria. According to the Pentagon, this assistance to the Kurdish-led SDF is a crucial part of their strategy to continue supporting the fight against IS (Lybrand, 2019) and to keep the conflict from escalating. The SDF is focused on fighting IS and not the Syrian government, which is still under the administration of Bashar Al Asshad.

The formation of the SDF was strongly opposed by Turkey, which was concerned about the Kurds' growing military strength. Turkey views the YPG, which makes up the bulk of the SDF as an extension of the PKK which has waged an armed campaign that has killed 40,000 people since 1984 (in Turkey) (Al-Jazeera, 2019). The PKK has supported the development of its military capabilities through the supply of personnel and training from its veteran forces and allegedly provided weapons to the YPG. Seeing this series of relationships, Turkey has made various efforts to suppress the SDF's position in Syria.

4.3 Turkey's Military Intervention against Kurds in Syria

The Arab Spring and its effects in Syria had a considerable impact on neighboring Turkey. Political instability in a country inhabited by other Kurdish tribes also prompted Turkey to increase its presence in the region to undermine the PKK (Noi, 2012). On the other hand, Turkey's increasing role in the civil war in Syria also worries the Syrian Kurds. Turkey is using military force to achieve its strategic goal of curtailing YPG activities by supporting the Syrian Liberation Army (FSA) factions and the Islamic brigades respectively to drive out their presence as well as attempting to build a unified Syrian opposition military force. Shaykh Said's rebellion in 1925 was the beginning of the Kurdish separatist movement in Turkey, but was successfully suppressed by Turkey. The emergence of the PKK has been a threat to Turkey, especially since the PKK has been carrying out disturbing armed attacks and suicide bombings. Tensions also exist between Turkey and Syria due to Syria's support for the PKK in the past. The PKK is recognized as a terrorist group by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the European Union, the United States, and other European countries. (Aytekin, 2016)

Turkey rejected the formation of the SDF in the North and Northeast of Syria, which is inhabited by Kurdish tribes because of the relationship between the Syrian Kurds and the PKK. But of course, this rejection received a wider response, not only from Kurdish groups in Turkey or Syria, but also from northern Iraq. This region, known as Northern Kurdistan, is the term Kurds use to refer to the area of Turkey they claim as part of their larger homeland (the regions of Iran, Iraq and Syria, referred to as Eastern, Southern and Western Kurdistan respectively). This is evidenced by statements to the media that the group, located in the Qandil mountains of Iraq, is ready to move in and stage another uprising in Ankara if the government does not immediately turn on the signs of the peace process. This was stated by a founder of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) named Cemil Bayik who later emphasized that Kurdish groups have the "right to retaliate" for policies carried out against Kurdish groups in Syria (Coles, 2013).

However, after Turkey denied arming rebels or facilitating the passage of foreign fighters who had joined Al Qaeda-affiliated factions in Syria, including the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and the Al Nusra Front, in 2013, military action was taken by Turkey to safeguard its national interests and deny the SDF influence on the Syrian-Turkish border. The Turkish army first set foot in Syria on August 24, 2016 when Operation Euphrates Shield began a series of multiple military missions that have taken

place in the north of the country over the past five years. The Turkish government's activism in Syria marks a defining moment in Turkey's domestic and foreign policy trajectory. Boiled down to its essence, Turkish policy in Syria has been driven by domestic politics.

There are 4 Turkish Military Operations in Syria from 2016 to 2020 summarized by Siccardi (2021), namely:

a. Operation Euphrates Shield

It began in August 2016 and lasted until March 2017 in northeastern Syria, bordering Turkey between the Euphrates River and the Afrin region. On August 24, 2016, Ankara sent warplanes, tanks, and special forces aided by the Free Syrian Army (FSA) across the border to ostensibly liberate the town of Jarablus and prevent the Kurds from advancing further West. Syria denounced the intervention as a violation of its sovereignty. Operation Euphrates Shield is considered the first Turkish ground intervention in Syria since the Syrian crisis began in 2011. In 2015 Turkish authorities launched a military operation in Turkey's southeastern region, which is largely populated by Kurdish tribes. In response, Kurdish militants carried out terrorist attacks in the country. Turkey took over a strip of Syrian Kurdish territory east and west of the Euphrates river. Turkish troops entered 19 miles into Syria to take control of the town of Al-Bab in February 2017. Turkey fears their presence will fuel an insurgency waged by the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in southeast Turkey.

b. Operation Olive Branch

Starting from January to March 2018 located in the Afrin region. The Turkish army conducted various military techniques including the use of traditional military techniques, counter-terrorism tactics and the use of sophisticated military equipment. Turkey succeeded in clearing the region of the YPG in cooperation with the Free Syrian Army (FSA) under the pretext that "military operations are essential for Turkey's security and Syria's territorial integrity" according to President Erdogan (VOA, 2018). Since launching its first intervention in Syria in 2016, Turkey has sought to build a unified Syrian opposition military force. It has managed to merge several pre-existing factions into a Syrian National Army consisting of three corps. These corps include all active military formations in northern Syria in addition to opposition factions displaced from Damascus and its countryside, Homs and Hama. The Syrian National Army reports to the Syrian Interim Government's Ministry of Defense, which is the executive body of the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces. But in practice, the SNA receives logistical, material and training support from the Turkish military. The three factions stationed in the Euphrates Shield region had previously received support from the United States, before this support was stopped due to their participation in this battle.

Here are the locations where these two operations were carried out as a form of Turkish military intervention in northern Syria:

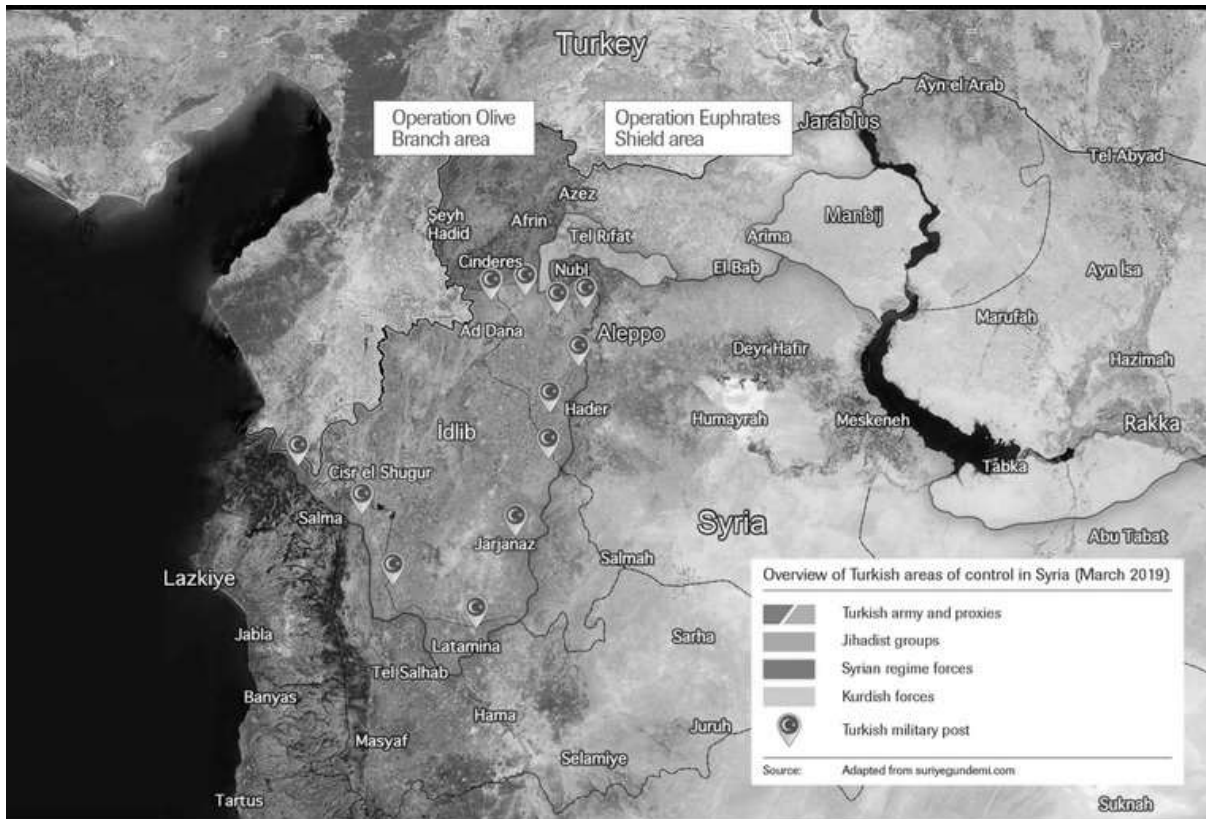


Figure 1. (*suriyegundemi.com* from Yuksel & Veen, 2019)

c. Operation Peace Spring

Operational in October 2019 on the Turkish-Syrian border between the towns of Tel Abyat and Ras Al-Ain. Turkey is slowly entering Syrian territory and repelling Kurdish forces from the border. The country patrols the safe zone in Northeast Syria along with troops from Russia, after being abandoned by the United States, Syrian Kurdish forces asked President Bashar for help from Turkish attacks. In addition to preventing the establishment of Kurdish autonomy on the Syrian-Turkish border, Ankara also wants to relocate Syrian refugees who have been on its land. A subsequent agreement was made by Turkey and the United States in the same month, resulting in a ceasefire from Turkey and the United States facilitating the withdrawal of YPG forces from the area. According to the UN, Operation Peace Spring has increased the number of refugees and worsened the humanitarian crisis. In a Wilson Center study, it was stated that Turkey had attacked Kurdish forces and civilians 3,319 times, launching cross-border attacks 12 times. At the same time, violence between Turkey's internal security forces and the PKK continued, causing PKK militant deaths to outnumber state security members by a ratio of more than four to one (Flock, 2021).

d. Operation Spring Shield

The latest military operation conducted from February to March 2020 used drone strikes to stop the Syrian regime from taking over the city of Idlib. In other words, Turkey assumes this agenda as an effort to prevent a humanitarian tragedy in Idlib. Continuing with a series of drone strikes until 2022, the Turkish Ministry of Defense said that the operation aimed to prevent Syrian regime forces from expanding further in the area while ensuring the security of Turkish forces by maintaining high tensions in northeastern Syria through reportedly targeting senior Syrian Kurdish figures (Tastekin, 2022). Turkey's

presence in the region is to prevent Syrian refugees from crossing the border into Turkey. Despite already hosting 3.6 million Syrian refugees (World Bank, 2021), the Turkish government's concern is inseparable from the desire to deport them to avoid assimilation with the native population as well as the tension of social conflict in Turkey. Inevitably, widespread unemployment and increasing population problems have made Syrian refugees a scapegoat for Turkish society. This was the main reason for the proposal to establish a buffer zone along the border of the two countries until Erdogan proposed a larger zone in the UN General Assembly.

The operation ended after an agreement for a ceasefire in Idlib was reached between Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow. The deal also included conducting joint patrols of the two countries' forces on the Aleppo-Latakia (M4) road. Meanwhile, regime forces renewed their offensive in the "de-escalation zone" in the northwest of the country, targeting several surrounding Syrian villages.

With its military operations, Ankara has spent most of its political and military resources in Syria to permanently weaken Kurdish forces along the Turkish-Syrian border. This effort is driven by domestic and foreign policy considerations. In addition, it should be noted that the emphasis of the PYD's struggle in Syria is not only from a political point of view, but also from a cultural one. In Syria, places and historical sites of Kurdish predecessors often become the object of their protection from the chaos of war. Reported in several Kurdish historical sites, some of which are found in Syria are Ain Dara Site, Abu'l-Fida Mosque, Hisn al-Akrad, Bab al-Ahmar, and Nimrod Fortress.

Internally, the Turkish government has used the Syrian conflict as a pretext to suppress the rights of Kurds living in Turkey and restrict their parliamentary representation to secure important constitutional reforms in 2017 (Siccardi F, 2021). The objectives of the military operation can be summarized in three main points, namely firstly to neutralize the YPG from the Syrian-Turkish border to ensure Turkey's border security, secondly to protect Syria's territorial integrity by enhancing the Syrian Interim Government's territorial control over the YPG and thirdly to enable safe zones for Syrian refugees as well as the voluntary repatriation of Syrian refugees in Turkey.

In the future, as stated by the Turkish National Security Council that "existing and future military operations" targeted by Turkey along its southern border are necessary for the security of the country but they are without any intention of targeting the sovereignty of its neighbors. The ambiguously worded statement left open the possibility that Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan would capitalize on the threats made to launch a new offensive targeting US-backed Kurdish forces in northern Syria. In response to the statement, US and Syrian Kurdish officials told Al-Monitor media that Turkey's threat of intervention to establish a 30-kilometer safe zone was taken very seriously by them.

The development of this issue has led to the launch of a wave of airstrikes by 60 Turkish warplanes targeting the positions of the Kurdish militia PKK militants in the northern region of Iraq and Syria, precisely in the town of Derik. Turkey regularly bombs the border areas between Iraq and Turkey where the PKK is based, but the first attack came from Turkey to the Sinjar border area and often said this was a "war against terrorism" which was responded to with a threat of retaliation to be carried out as soon as possible (Arab News, 2022). The Turkish president said that Turkish forces now aim to take new areas, including the towns of Tel Rifaat and Manbij, which are located at a major crossroads on Syria's west-east highway known as the M4. Turkey says Syrian Kurdish fighters are using Tel Rifaat as a base to attack areas held by Turkish-backed Syrian opposition fighters. "The main targets of these operations will be areas which are centers of

attacks to our country and safe zones," he said, indicating that the problem will expand and not stop at one zone. Interior Minister Suleiman Soylu clarified Turkey's policy of planning to build 240,000 housing units in Syrian territory under its control in the Tal Abyad region of northern Syria (The New Arab, 2022). Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan stated that this statement is supported by a policy of encouraging one million Syrian refugees to return to their country by building housing and local infrastructure there. Turkey hosts around 3.7 million Syrian refugees, who have been subjected to rising racism and xenophobia. Amidst a deteriorating economic situation with inflation reaching over 70% with rising unemployment, Turkish citizens are consequently experiencing real existential and possible discrimination against Syrians, with some being arbitrarily arrested and deported to war zones in Syria by Turkish authorities.

The form the intervention is currently taking is supporting Syrian National Army fighters armed and trained by the suspected Turkish military in preparation for a new operation. But despite assurances from Turkey's National Security Council that the military action "does not target the territorial integrity and sovereignty of our neighbors in any way," officials of the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces and the SDF's political wing told that a Turkish offensive could spell disaster for Syria's security from ISIS. Because any Turkish aggression would pose a threat by thwarting the guarding of 10,000 ISIS captives and ongoing weekly operations against the terror group in the region.

From Turkey's internal perspective, the policy towards the Kurds in Syria has been overwhelmingly supported by constituencies across Turkey. Furthermore, it has become a political agenda that has helped Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his Justice and Development Party (AKP) maintain power through several political challenges in the year following the coup attempt in 2016. He made this effort to revive nationalist sentiments among voters and at the same time increase his declining popularity a year before the presidential election in June 2023, according to a survey by Turkish institutions and media.

4.4 The Impact of Turkey's Military Operation in Syria on International Attitudes

Overall, Turkey's involvement in Syria has not only been a source of conflict or rapprochement with the involved parties and its neighbors across the region. International attitudes towards Turkish military interventions vary with each operation depending on the level of tension in relations with Turkey. To illustrate, the United States welcomed the first Turkish Operation in the Euphrates against ISIS in rural northern Aleppo (August 2016 to March 2017), deeming it to be in the national security interests of the United States itself. Such approval was seen from Germany and France, although Russia voiced reservations over its unfavorable position. Terrorism being a reality everywhere in the world, focusing on a historical and sociological approach (Dione, 2018). In contrast, the subsequent Operation Olive Branch against Kurdish fighters in the Afrin region (in January-March 2018) was accepted by the United States, the United Kingdom, and Russia, while France and Germany appeared to express concern that the operation was not conducive to stabilization or resolution in Syria, pointing to the success of Kurdish fighters in combating ISIS (Kara, 2022).

As for the Operation Peaceful Springs against the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in the border area between Tall Abyad and Ras al-Ayn (October-November 2019), it received understanding from the Russian side, which considered it a step towards weakening the Western-allied SDF, while the United States and the European Union both spoke out against the operation. At the internal Syrian level, the Syrian National Coalition opposition group supported all three Turkish operations, hailing them as positive steps

against terrorism, while the Assad regime and the SDF objected to what they described as the Turkish occupation of the north of the country. These large-scale military operations appear to carry high risks and are likely to refocus the antennae of the United States and Russia, which also have a military presence in northern Syria.

As one of Syria's closest allies, Russia's role in Syria has been crucial in turning the tide of the conflict in Syria - which began amid the Arab Spring uprisings against the continued rule of Syrian President Bashar Al Assad. Syrian opposition fighters are relegated to enclaves in the northwest and Turkey's sphere of influence. But with Russia focused on its current problems with Ukraine, it is likely that Vladimir Putin will not stand in Erdogan's way over what is essentially "just a piece of land" along Turkey's southern border.

Looking ahead, the United States has made clear its opposition to a Turkish military strike, saying it would risk hard-won gains in the campaign against IS. The US-backed and Kurdish-led forces in northern Syria said they would turn to the government in Syria for support if Turkey continued its threat to launch a new offensive on their operations. The Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) said after its command meeting that its priority was to reduce tensions near the border with Turkey, but also prepare for a long fight if Ankara carries out its threats. The announcement appeared to be a message aimed at the United States and was meant to elicit pressure from the United States on Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to shelve his offensive plans (Gebeily, 2022).

In the author's view, Turkey's involvement as a source of conflict in Syria is a place for Turkey's more aggressive and nationalistic self-existence in the implementation of its foreign policy. Turkey's military operation in Syria is a manifestation of Turkey's domestic priorities and national interests that have been deeply rooted, especially to limit the movement of Kurdish tribes both in their country and in Syria. This military intervention, as mentioned earlier, is the use of military force beyond national borders to alter the internal affairs of a state that has violated international law or widely known as international norms. The existence of the YPG as an affiliate of the PKK incorporated in the SDF is the cause of Turkey's punitive intervention in Syrian territory.

V. Conclusion

Based on this paper, it can be concluded that Turkey has a national interest to maintain its national security related to the conflict with the PKK (umbrella affiliates of PYD and YPG) and the refugee problem by intervening militarily in Syria, especially against ethnic Kurds. Turkey wants all parties to be the enemy of the Kurds, to fight the Kurds as it considers the perpetrators of terrorism. This military operation operationalizes J. G. Starke's concept of punitive intervention used in this research, which is a form of state intervention against another state as a reason for the losses suffered by that state, which in this case Turkey intervened in an offensive manner. Turkey implemented military operations to the Syrian border, especially northeast Syria which is controlled by Kurdish tribes for its national interests. This is interesting to study and explore to find a solution, because the conflict between Turkey and the Kurds, the international community may encourage and hope that it can be resolved directly by them through dialog. However, if we pay attention to the latest news developments, it seems that the path of dialog does not seem to be an option, especially by Turkey. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, for example, rejected US President Donald Trump's proposal for ceasefire talks with the Syrian Kurds, but he agreed to continue dialogue with the United States in order to freely continue his actions against the Kurds in Syria. Therefore, the international community

needs to anticipate this, especially since this conflict expands the scale of the war that is currently still ongoing in Syria.

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