

# Syria/Kurdistan: The results of the Kobane war; so far...

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The battle of Kobane has been continuing for the past month. The attacks started on the 15<sup>th</sup> of September, and according to initial plans, firstly the surrounding the villages and then the town centre was to all by the 20<sup>th</sup> of September.

The Turkish state officials also made contingencies in accordance with this plans and was expecting for 400,000 people from Kobane to come to Urfa by the 20<sup>th</sup>. This way, Turkey would be 'the country opening its arms to Kobane when it falls'.

When this plan collapsed, in the redrawn plan some were talking of celebrating Eid in the mosques of Kobane. Some must have indulged in this plan so much that they were unable to held back from running with headlines like 'the expected scenario never materialised'. Then Erdogan could no longer hold himself and gave away his feelings when he declared 'Kobane is about to fall'. However, Kobane never fell; it resisted, and is still resisting. This resistance is now the main agenda of not only the Kurds and the Middle East, but the whole world.

Then let's take a look at Kobane under a few subheadings:

## The military situation

The 15<sup>th</sup> of September Kobane attack by ISIS was an expected development after ISIS occupied Mosul and overran military bases belonging to the Syrian army in Raqqah. The YPG made preparations for this within its means. When the attacks began, the YPG evacuated the surrounding villages around Kobane. Some of the people were brought to Kobane and the rest went across the border into Suruc next to their relatives. The evacuation of tens of thousands of people was a successful operation. The YPG was aware of the size of the attack that was being planned and took this precaution in order prevent a massacre.

The geographic conditions and ISIS's superior weapons advantage meant that the YPG had to narrow the lines defence. By doing this, the YPG was able to better position itself. The last stage was urban warfare and so the main preparations were made for this. ISIS believed this to be a weakness and thought the progress it made on deserted lands was a success for itself. This is why Erdogan, some US officials and analysts made the claim that 'Kobane was about to fall'.

However, the real battle with ISIS started on the edges of the town. ISIS fired mortars from a

distance in the hope of clearing a path for itself. This is how it was able to enter the neighbourhoods on the outskirts of the town. They lost hundreds of fighters as a result of ambushes by the YPG/YPJ fighters. And for the past 4 days they have been unable to make any progress whatsoever. Many of their attacks have been repelled. Now, ISIS is attempting to use car bombs against YPG positions. These cars have been noticed and destroyed from a distance. In the havoc caused by these explosions, ISIS fighters are able to take a few steps forward. However, in urban warfare, those who know the city are at an advantage; and in the current urban war, the YPG has turned Kobane into the Bermuda Triangle for ISIS.

Another factor that has changed the course of the battle has been the intensifying coalition airstrikes. In the last few days, the strikes have been very effective. Strikes have ISIS's heavy weapons, but because their supply lines have not been effectively targeted, as of yet, they are able to bring in reinforcements. According to some YPG commanders, if the coalition had conducted the airstrikes at this intensity from the beginning, ISIS could not have reached Kobane. This means, that the coalition is conducting a controlled and gradual campaign.

The coordinates for the coalition airstrikes are being supplied from Kobane. However, it must be said that not every coordinate given is being targeted. This is being read as part of the coalition's desire to be 'the saviour'. ISIS, on the other hand, is trying to spread itself across the city in order to decrease the effectivity of the airstrikes. If the sides on the ground mix in with each other than airstrikes will be more difficult to carry out.

YPG is surprising everyone by saying that it is not going to let ISIS live in Kobane. They say "Kobane is not Mosul". We are talking about thousands of people willing to sacrifice their lives in order to live on their land. This is why ISIS taking Kobane, is as impossible as the Sun not rising tomorrow.

## **The international aspect**

The Kobane resistance has opened the door to important gains for the Kurds in the press, the international community and in diplomacy. Those that had never even heard of Kurdistan before, now know of Kobane. This resistance has introduced the Kurdistan Freedom Movement and the Women's Liberation Movement to the world. It has also opened important diplomatic doors for Kurdish representatives. Many important meetings were held with important forces in the world. These gains will consolidate the position of the Kurds in the region.

## **Intra-Kurdish relations**

The Kobane resistance has consolidated Kurdish unity much the same way as the Halabja and Sinjar massacres did. It has led to a massive spiritual and political synergy. On this platform, first a KCK delegation went to meet with the parties of South Kurdistan, then the Southern parties gathered among each other and then the parties of Rojava joined them. All Kurdish political figures were forced to adopt a line of national unity; because it was finally understood that those that did not adopt this line would be damned by the Kurdish people.

## **Relations with Turkey**

While the ISIS attacks were ongoing, Turkey invited Salih Muslim to Turkey. However, this invite never went any further than being a delaying tactic. The Turkish state made promises like "we will

support you in every way, if need be we will also strike ISIS, just relax” probably in order to weaken the desire of the resistance in Kobane. The Kurds were aware of this, although they did not close the door on the Turks they did however take their own precautions. Currently, the Turkish state is not in good condition in the international arena. Even more striking was the fact that Turkey’s animosity towards the Kurds and how it dictated state policies was now out in the open. Turkey’s stance forced the Kurds to reanalyse the situation. This reanalysis is not only a political action, but one that occurred in the hearts and minds of all the Kurds. “How are Turkish-Kurdish relations going to be? Why all this animosity?” are only some of the questions being frequently asked.

Maybe Turkey needs to be thinking about these questions before the Kurds do. No doubt one place where the answer to these questions will be clarified is the island of Imrali, where meetings are continuing with the Kurdish people’s leader Abdullah Ocalan. Turkey’s policy towards and handling of the Kobane situation will determine the future of the meetings and dialogue in Imrali Island.

In conclusion, we are in the middle of a war. In wars, the balances can tilt from time to time. However, in a short time, ISIS will be gradually cleared from the neighbourhoods of Kobane, and the villages surrounding Kobane. As a result of this process, we can say that ISIS will also be cleared from the villages of Tel Abyad to the east, Sirrin to the south and Jarablus and Azzaz to the west. This charge will not only determine the future of the region, but will shape the destiny of all Kurds and Kurdistan.

Those who support this struggle for humanity will be victorious; those who positioned themselves on the wrong side of history supposedly being ‘impartial’ will drown with the dark forces.

History will write this, and we will witness this history.

**Amed Dicle**

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<http://www.kurdishquestion.com/kurdistan/west-kurdistan/the-results-of-the-kobane-war-so-far.html>