

**Statement on Turkey's Actions in Northeast Syria**

*October 14, 2019*

I will soon be issuing an Executive order authorizing the imposition of sanctions against current and former officials of the Government of Turkey and any persons contributing to Turkey's destabilizing actions in northeast Syria. Likewise, the steel tariffs will be increased back up to 50 percent, the level prior to reduction in May. The United States will also immediately stop negotiations, being led by the Department of Commerce, with respect to a \$100 billion trade deal with Turkey.

This order will enable the United States to impose powerful additional sanctions on those who may be involved in serious human rights abuses, obstructing a cease-fire, preventing displaced persons from returning home, forcibly repatriating refugees, or threatening the peace, security, or stability in Syria. The order will authorize a broad range of consequences, including financial sanctions, the blocking of property, and barring entry into the United States.

Since my first day in office, the Trump administration has worked tirelessly to preserve the safety and security of the United States and its citizens. The United States and our partners have liberated 100 percent of ISIS's ruthless territorial caliphate. Turkey must not put these gains in jeopardy. Turkey must also prioritize the protection of civilians, particularly vulnerable ethnic and religious minorities in northeast Syria. Indiscriminate targeting of civilians, destruction of civilian infrastructure, and targeting of ethnic or religious minorities is unacceptable. Additionally, the return of refugees must be conducted in a safe, voluntary, and dignified manner.

Turkey's military offensive is endangering civilians and threatening peace, security, and stability in the region. I have been perfectly clear with President Erdogan: Turkey's action is precipitating a humanitarian crisis and setting conditions for possible war crimes. Turkey must ensure the safety of civilians, including religious and ethnic minorities, and is now, or may be in the future, responsible for the ongoing detention of ISIS terrorists in the region. Unfortunately, Turkey does not appear to be mitigating the humanitarian effects of its invasion.

As I have said, I am withdrawing the remaining United States servicemembers from northeast Syria. As United States forces have defeated the ISIS physical caliphate, United States troops coming out of Syria will now redeploy and remain in the region to monitor the situation and prevent a repeat of 2014, when the neglected threat of ISIS raged across Syria and Iraq. A small footprint of United States forces will remain at At Tanf Garrison in southern Syria to continue to disrupt remnants of ISIS.

The United States will aggressively use economic sanctions to target those who enable, facilitate, and finance these heinous acts in Syria. I am fully prepared to swiftly destroy Turkey's economy if Turkish leaders continue down this dangerous and destructive path.

NOTE: The statement referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist organization.

*Categories:* Statements by the President : Turkey, actions in northeast Syria.

*Names:* Erdogan, Recep Tayyip.

*Subjects:* Syria : Civil war and sectarian conflict; Syria : U.S. military forces, withdrawal; Terrorism : Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist organization; Turkey : President; Turkey : Syria, role; Turkey : Trade with U.S.

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