

Syria cease-fire in question after fighting, shelling reported

Just hours after President Trump announced a cease-fire between Turkish and Kurdish-led forces in Syria, journalists have reported continued fighting in the Syrian town of Ras al-Ayn on Friday morning, while other areas have reported relative calm since the agreement.

Journalists from the Associated Press reported witnessing shelling and said they could see smoke billowing around the town, which sits along the border with Turkey. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a war monitor, reported intermittent clashes in Ras al-Ayn, but calm elsewhere.

Reuters also reported machine-gun fire and shelling that could be heard from a border town in Turkey near Ra al-Ayn.



Oct. 17: In this photo taken from the Turkish side of the border between Turkey and Syria, in Ceylanpinar, Sanliurfa province, southeastern Turkey, flames and smoke billow from a fire on a target in Ras al-Ayn, Syria, caused by shelling by Turkish forces. (Associated Press)

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, who is in Jerusalem, did not respond to repeated questions on whether or not the agreement was violated, the New York

Times reported.

Trump had praised the cease-fire agreement as “a great day for civilization.” He pointed to it as a victory after being criticized for his decision to withdraw U.S. forces from the region. At a rally on Thursday, he said it was his “unconventional” approach that led to the deal.

The agreement requires the Kurdish fighters to vacate a swath of territory in Syria along the Turkish border, largely solidifying Turkey’s position.

A senior military official — who worked on designing the U.S. anti-ISIS strategy with both the Kurds and the Turks — told Fox News earlier that the 120-hour cease-fire had little chance of success.

“There is no way the Kurds can leave that security zone,” the source said. “There are thousands of Kurds who live in what the Turks want as a buffer zone. That’s what these fighters’ families live. That is where they are from.”

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Vice President Mike Pence told Fox News in an exclusive interview that Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan knows Trump “says what he means” when he talks about slapping new sanctions on Turkey if its military defies the terms of the agreement.

Pence acknowledged the Trump administration was grateful to the Kurds that “helped us defeat ISIS,” but point out that Turkey “had very real issues of terrorism and ISIS and the PKK organization, a Kurdish terrorist group the United States recognized as a terrorist organization many years ago.”

Fox News’ Jennifer Griffin, Melissa Leon, and the Associated Press contributed to this report.

Source:

<https://www.foxnews.com/world/fighting-breaks-out-in-syrian-town-despite-cease-fire-reporters-say>

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