



## US army resumes theft of Syrian oil weeks after deadly quake

### Description

**USA: White House officials have previously boasted that Washington ‘owns’ one third of Syria’s territory, in particular the resource-rich northeast**

The US occupation army renewed its oil smuggling campaign in northeast Syria three weeks after a 7.7 magnitude earthquake ravaged the war-torn country.

According to eyewitness reports from the countryside of Al-Yarubiyah in Hasakah governorate, on 27 February, US troops transported at least 34 tankers filled with stolen Syrian oil through the illegal Al-Mahmoudiya border crossing to their bases in Iraq.

The oil was plundered from Syria’s northeast Jazira region, the country’s primary energy and grain-producing region.

Washington maintains approximately 900 troops in Syria, primarily split between the Al-Tanf base and the country’s northeastern region. Their occupation is illegal under international law as it was carried out without government approval.

Though US troops – accompanied by fighters from the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) – initially occupied large swathes of Syria under the pretext of fighting ISIS, the official rationale for the occupation changed once ISIS was largely defeated.

In infamous comments made in 2019, former US President Donald Trump said: “We’re keeping [Syria’s] oil. We have the oil. The oil is secure. We left troops behind only for the oil.”

The same year, the current US Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for West Asia, Dana Stroul, noted during a speech at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) that “one-third of Syrian territory was owned by the US military, with its local partner the SDF.”

The White House official made it a point to highlight that the territory Washington controls is the “economic powerhouse of Syria, so where the hydrocarbons are ... as well as the agricultural powerhouse.”

According to an investigation by *The Cradle*, dozens of tankers pass through illegal crossings between Iraq and Syria every week in convoys accompanied by US warplanes or helicopters.

Shepherds in the region corroborate these claims, saying that the Syrian oil is transported to the Al-Harir military site in Erbil, the capital of the Iraqi Kurdistan Region (IKR), a region known as a “hub” for western and Israeli spy agencies.

In August of last year, the Syrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs claimed that the losses incurred by the country’s oil and gas sector as a result of US actions amounted to \$107 billion since the beginning of the Syrian crisis in 2011.

Following this month’s devastating earthquake, which ravaged Syria’s northwest, the US was forced to temporarily lift unilateral sanctions on the country that hindered aid delivery to affected areas.

On the same day US troops smuggled the latest convoy of Syrian fuel out of the country, State Department spokesman Ned Price urged the international community not to let humanitarian assistance to Syria be accompanied by normalization with the government of President Bashar al-Assad.

By News Desk

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