
Battle of the Valleys

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Authors

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The areas where the battles take place are very rough areas that are difficult to control, not to mention the difficulty in controlling the mountains in general. Then two more valleys are of strategic importance from a military point of view, and the main objective of these battles between the rivers Zab and Avashin-Bassian may be the conquest of these valleys (Geli Zab and Geli Balinda).

Identify Conflict Zones

Due to the many names of the areas in which the battles take place, there is some ambiguity in clarifying the locations of those names for those willing to study. The actual fighting is concentrated in the north of the Amadiyah district. The real battle is underway to conquer the valleys of Zab and Balinda. This is because controlling the surrounding mountains is of tactical and strategic importance at the same time.

According to the Turkish sources, PKK and the KRG, in addition to the normal fighting, there was also an attempted airdrop, and the fighting reached other areas such as Matin mountain, Korazar mountain, Geli Rashava and the Avashin-Basyan region.

Matin Mountain is located on the right side of the Zab Valley (on the southwestern side of it). Korezar mountain is located in the southeast of that valley behind the city of Shiladze and opposite ancient Hetiti. As for Rashava, it is a few kilometres from the city of Deralouk at the beginning of the Zab Valley.

Behind Deralouk and along the Zab there is a long valley stretching between 20-25 km reaching Cukurca Mountain in Turkey's Hakkari province. It creates an excellent environment for all kinds of guerrilla warfare and no one has been able to master it during the long years of fighting.

[Birendara Cave](#), in which the Turks tried to set up their infantry, is located in the middle of the Zab Valley, north of ancient Hetiti, and Chiayi Rush (or Black Mountain) overlooks that cave and extends up to the border. Whoever can control Chiayi Rush and Brindara Cave will directly control the Zab Valley, therefore the clashes are concentrated there.

From the east of Mount Kurezar, miles northeast of Shiladze, a rugged mountainous region of Gali Balinda begins and runs past the village of Bedi and the Doscia Mountains to reach Avashen. This region has always been an important centre for the PKKs, from there they could reach the regions of Hakkari. There is also the Bassian region, which is just a few miles from Avashin, an excellent environment for guerrilla warfare.

In summary, operations are currently underway around two major valleys in the north of the Amadiyah district along the Zab River, Bassian-Avashin.

Was It Expected?

Of course and without a doubt, these operations are considered an extension of [\(Claw\) operations](#) that Turkey started in 2019. This operation in particular is considered the eighth operation of its kind. The first started in May 2019 in the Bradost region. In July of the same year, Operation Claw 2, which was famous as the operations on Mount Gara, began. Accordingly, the operation (Claw 3) was unlike the previous two operations, as it took place within the northwestern borders of the Kurdistan region in Sinat and Heftanin, followed by the two operations (Claw of the Falcon and Claw of the Tiger), which usually were carried out in the form of aerial bombardments. Operation Tiger Claw 2, targeting Mount Kara, took place in February 2021.

On April 24, 2021, Turkey launched Operation Claw-Thunderbolt in Mtina and Avashin-Basyan, and it appears that the current operation, called Claw-Lock, is an extension of that.

Turkey focused on the northeastern and western borders in 2019, with the Brados region to the east and Heftanin to the west. It focused on the intermediate areas. But in 2020, the Turks focused on this area with Amadiyah, which mediates in those areas as a whole. If the Turks were able to control the mountains after Amadiyah, they managed to create a tampon area for their borders and also fasten the joints of the military pincers they started. One of their goals may be to push the PKKs away from their borders and push them deeper into the Kurdistan region.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that complete control of the frontier mountains is not an easy matter, and the more difficult thing is how to master the mountains and rugged valleys behind Amadiyah. We do not forget that the intensification of operations by taking advantage of technological advances and taking into account the political fear that prevails in Iraq and the world, all this can facilitate their aim and also increase the differences between the PKK and KDP, such as happened in the events of (Sari Amidi), especially because the region has expressed its concern about the relocation of the operations to the depths of its territory and that the PKK is also talking about the relocation of Peshmarga to Korazar mountain.

The natural result of all this is the transfer of the battlefield deep into the territory of the region, as happened in the areas of Western Kurdistan.

It seems that the Iraqi political situation, the ongoing internal conflict between the regional parties, the world's preoccupation with the Ukrainian war, as well as Turkey's preparation for the 2023 elections, have all created a political foundation that has led the Turks to enable to run that process. But due to the ruggedness of the region, it is difficult for Turkey to completely erase the PKK's presence; they could only complicate things for them. The operation was called claw-lock. To what extent will this operation be able to achieve Turkey's goals?

It will likely achieve the temporary goals of the Turkish side until the post-election stage. The reason for this is that the Turkish president's need for the nationalist wings in his country to win the upcoming elections is coupled with a parallel need represented by co-opting the vital role of the HDP party as he does not want to force it to ally with the (National Alliance) party.