

# Commenting on Firas Elias: Iran Fears Turkey's Military Operation in Afrin...

by [Hassan Mneimneh \(/experts/hassan-mneimneh\)](#)

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

[Hassan Mneimneh \(/experts/hassan-mneimneh\)](#)

Hassan Mneimneh is a contributing editor with Fikra Forum and a principal at Middle East Alternatives in Washington.



Brief Analysis

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**<http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/fikraforum/view/why-does-iran-fear-turkeys-military-operation-in-afrin>** by Firas Elias presents a best-case scenario for the Turkish operation in Afrin. It suggests that

Ankara's action may deny Iran access to the Mediterranean, disrupt or even reverse the Damascus regime's gains in the crucial hinterland of Aleppo, and pit IS against Iranian proxies. It is true that Iran, along with its client Assad regime, opposes this Turkish move. However, counter-assessments can readily be summoned. The Turkish attack certainly derails any potential U.S. attempt at crafting a coherent policy that accommodates diverse allies and partners. More dramatically, it seeds and amplifies long-lasting animosity between Syria's communities, and further divides and discredits the remnants of the Syrian national armed opposition.

Paradoxically, Turkey's latest military intervention also favors the outcome it is supposed to oppose, that of a distinct Kurdish state or statelet at the Turkish borders. Afrin's valiant resistance to a disproportionately mightier invader will serve as a potent symbol for the Syrian Kurdish call for autonomy or independence. Thus, the whole debate about the aftermath of this battle is premature. Turkey in Afrin seems to be a repeat of Turkey in al-Bab: a presumably powerful army unable to realize its stated aims within the expected time frame, and eventually (as indications alas already abound) resorting to brute force methods at the expense of the civilian population, merely in order to claim some form of victory. ❖

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