

Kurdish Militia Rejects Disarmament Amid Syria's Rising Tensions

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Syria's Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) have declared it "impossible" to relinquish their weapons as sectarian violence and the looming threat of an Islamic State (ISIS) resurgence grip the country. The statement comes as President Ahmed Al Sharaa struggles to unify Syria's fractured regions following years of civil war, with the SDF's integration into state institutions faltering.

In March, the SDF, a predominantly Kurdish militia backed by the United States, agreed to merge with Syria's national forces as part of Al Shara's broader plan to consolidate power. However, the process has hit significant roadblocks. Authorities in Damascus have accused the SDF of delaying integration. At the same time, recent clashes in southern Syria involving Bedouin tribes and the Druze minority have further undermined efforts to stabilise the nation.

On Tuesday, SDF spokesman Abjar Daoud addressed the mounting challenges. In an interview with Kurdish media, he stated, "In light of the ongoing tensions in Syria, the escalating violence, and the threat of ISIS, it is impossible for our forces to surrender their weapons." Daoud emphasised that the SDF could join the Syrian army through a constitutional agreement recognising the Kurdish community's distinct identity. He clarified that the militia "is not in favour of war" but would "defend its people" if necessary.

External pressures further complicate the situation. Turkey, a staunch opponent of Kurdish autonomy, issued a stark warning on Tuesday. Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan suggested that Turkey could intervene to prevent any moves toward Syrian fragmentation. His comments appeared to target Israel, which recently conducted airstrikes in Damascus in support of the Druze minority. Fidan condemned the strikes, accusing Israel of seeking a divided and weakened Syria to destabilise the region. He also singled out the Kurdish YPG, a key SDF component, claiming they were exploiting the chaos to pursue autonomy. "This leads nowhere," Fidan warned, describing such ambitions as a path to "a big strategic catastrophe."

Syria's fragile state has been exacerbated by intensified anti-ISIS operations, driven by pressure from Washington. The extremist group, though diminished, continues to pose a threat, with recent raids targeting its members. These efforts, while critical, have stretched Syria's resources and exposed the challenges of unifying disparate factions under Al Sharaa's leadership.

The SDF's refusal to disarm underscores the deep mistrust between Syria's various factions and the government in Damascus. With sectarian violence flaring, ISIS regrouping, and foreign powers exerting influence, Al Sharaa's vision of a unified Syria hangs in the balance. The coming months will test whether constitutional agreements can bridge divides or if the nation will slide further into instability.