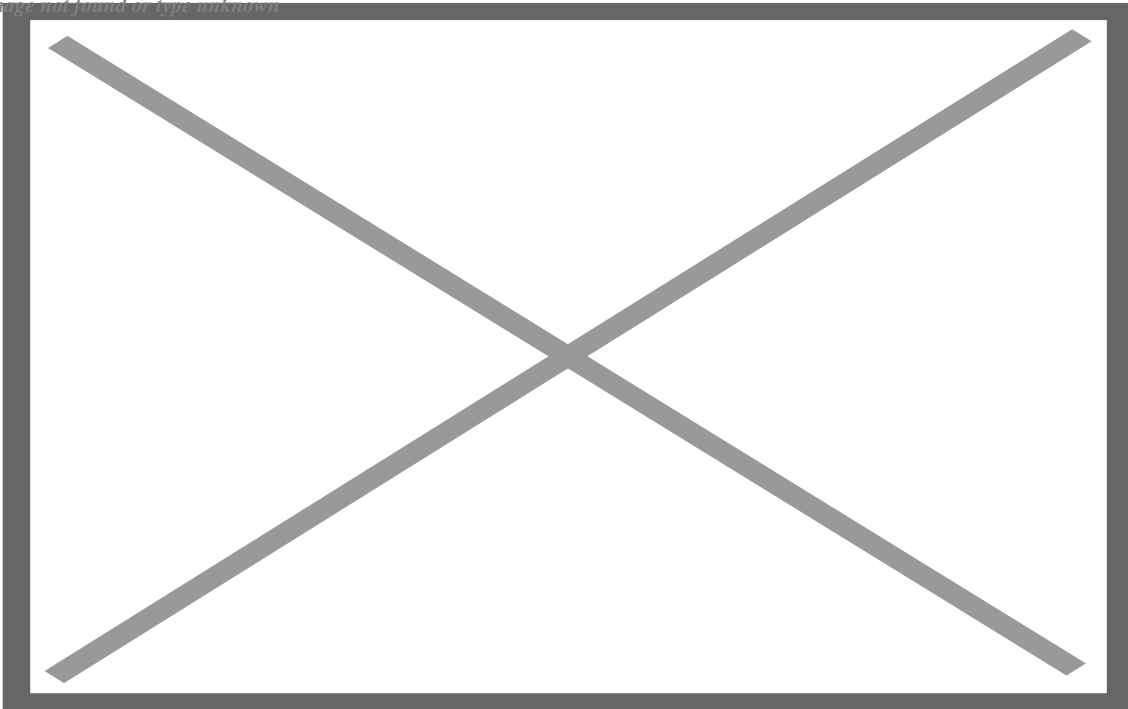


U.S. military forces smuggle wheat crops, crude oil from northeast Syria to Iraq

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This file picture shows a military convoy of US occupation forces driving along a road near the city of Qamishli in Syria's northeastern province of Hasakah. (Photo by AFP)

Damascus, October 18 (RHC)-- Two separate convoys of U.S. military trucks and tankers have carried tons of grain and crude oil from the northeastern province of Hasakah to the semi-autonomous Kurdistan region in northern Iraq, as part of Washington's systematic smuggling of basic commodities out of Syria.

Local sources, requesting anonymity, told Syria's official news agency SANA that 92 military vehicles loaded with wheat crops and oil from the Jazira Region rumbled through al-Waleed border crossing in al-Ya'rubiya region and entered the Iraqi territories on Monday.

The sources added that another convoy of 58 tankers carrying stolen oil headed for northern Iraq through the illegal al-Mahmoudiyah crossing. The U.S. military has for long stationed its forces and equipment in northeastern Syria, with the Pentagon claiming that the deployment is aimed at preventing the oilfields in

the area from falling into the hands of Daesh terrorists.

Damascus, however, maintains the deployment is meant to plunder the country's natural resources. Former US president Donald Trump admitted on several occasions that American forces were in the Arab country for its oil wealth.

On September 21, China called on the United States to stop plundering Syria's national resources and respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Arab country. "We call on the United States to respect Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity, unilaterally lift sanctions, and end the theft of Syria's national resources," China's Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told a news briefing.

Wang said: "This is not the first time that the United States military has stolen oil from Syria and they seem to be becoming more and more uncontrollable." The Chinese spokesman also said the U.S. government has a duty to investigate robberies committed by intervening military forces, as well as to compensate for the damages caused.

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