

Syria Situation Report: August 16 – 28, 2018

1 Aug 21: Unknown Militants Target Syrian Government Official in Southern Syria: Unidentified militants opened fire on a government convoy carrying Syrian Minister of Defense Gen. Ali Abdullah Ayyoub in Tarba in majority-Druze Suwayda Province. Local villagers reportedly shouted insults as the convoy retreated. Ayyoub had been conducting a tour of pro-government forces fighting against the Islamic State (IS) in Eastern Suwayda Province.

2 Aug 18: Abu Amara Special Tasks Battalion Conducts Second Assassination in Hama Province in Two Weeks:

The Abu Amara Special Tasks Battalion - an opposition group affiliated with Syrian Al-Qaeda affiliate Hay'at Tahrir a-Sham (HTS) and Salafi-Jihadist group Ahrar a-Sham - claimed to assassinate a member of the Palestine Branch of the Syrian Military Intelligence Directorate near Masyaf in Western Hama Province.

3 Aug 17: Hay'at Tahrir a-Sham Dissolves Shura Councils in Northern Hama Province:

Syrian Al-Qaeda affiliate Hay'at Tahrir a-Sham (HTS) dissolved its governing shura councils in opposition-held Northern Hama Province. HTS turned over governance to a set of local councils affiliated with the Syrian Interim Government. HTS-affiliated media confirmed the "reorganization" of dozens of local councils as part of a plan to provide administrative jobs for local residents. The plan will reportedly be overseen by an HTS official identified as Abu Radwan al-Khattabi.

4 Aug 7 - 27: Syrian Forces and Iranian Proxies Deploy to Borders of Idlib Province in Preparation for Offensive:

Pro-government forces deployed from Southern Syria to Northern Hama and Latakia Provinces between August 21 - 27. Liwa al-Quds, Liwa Imam Hussein, and other proxy forces backed by Iran also deployed to areas near Idlib Province from Damascus.

5 Aug 21: Al-Qaeda Leader Visits Front in Northern Latakia Province:

Hay'at Tahrir a-Sham (HTS) Emir Abu Muhammad al-Jolani visited positions held by HTS in Northern Latakia Province. HTS-affiliated media published photos of Jolani accompanied by a small group of unidentified officials at frontline positions in Kabani approximately eight miles southwest of Jisr a-Shughour in Western Idlib Province.

6 Aug 18: Unknown Militants Target Turkish-Backed Opposition Headquarters in Idlib Province: Unknown militants detonated an explosive device targeting the headquarters of the National Liberation Front (NLF) - a coalition of opposition groups backed by Turkey including Salafi-Jihadist group Ahrar a-Sham - in Jabal Arbain near Ariha in Idlib Province. Some activists described the blast as a VBIED. The attack killed at least two people and injured several others.

7 Aug 19 - 20: Turkish-Backed Opposition Groups Join Arrest Campaign in Idlib Province:

Hay'at Tahrir a-Sham (HTS) and the National Liberation Front (NLF) backed by Turkey detained roughly thirty-five individuals across Idlib Province on charges of their support for reconciliation with Damascus. The arrests were concentrated in Maarat Misrin north of Idlib City.

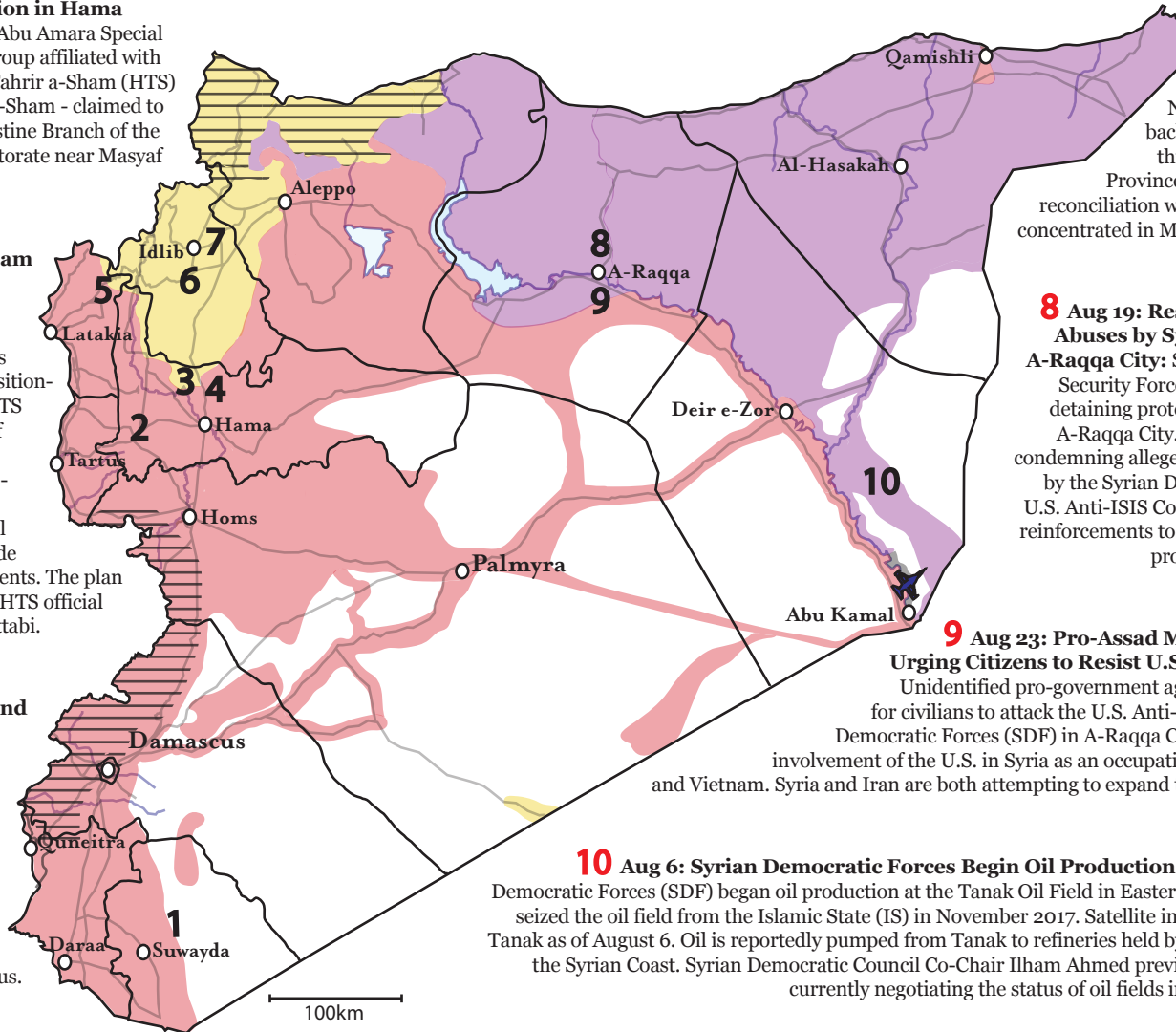
8 Aug 19: Residents Continue to Protest Abuses by Syrian Democratic Forces in A-Raqqa City:

Syrian Kurdish Asayish Internal Security Forces opened fire on civilians while detaining protesters in the Mashlab District of A-Raqqa City. The protesters were reportedly condemning alleged abuses against local residents by the Syrian Democratic Forces backed by the U.S. Anti-ISIS Coalition. The SDF later deployed reinforcements to the district in order to quell the protests and arrest demonstrators.

9 Aug 23: Pro-Assad Militants Distribute Leaflets Urging Citizens to Resist U.S. and SDF in A-Raqqa City:

Unidentified pro-government agents distributed leaflets calling for civilians to attack the U.S. Anti-ISIS Coalition and allied Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in A-Raqqa City. The leaflets condemned the involvement of the U.S. in Syria as an occupation similar to Iraq, Afghanistan, and Vietnam. Syria and Iran are both attempting to expand their networks in Eastern Syria.

10 Aug 6: Syrian Democratic Forces Begin Oil Production in Eastern Syria: The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) began oil production at the Tanak Oil Field in Eastern Deir e-Zor Province. The SDF seized the oil field from the Islamic State (IS) in November 2017. Satellite images show active production at Tanak as of August 6. Oil is reportedly pumped from Tanak to refineries held by the government in Baniyas on the Syrian Coast. Syrian Democratic Council Co-Chair Ilham Ahmed previously stated that the SDF is not currently negotiating the status of oil fields in Eastern Syria with Damascus.



Areas of Control*

- Pro-Government Forces
- The Islamic State
- Kurdish Forces
- Opposition Forces
- Mixed Control
- Hay'at Tahrir a-Sham
*Formerly Jabhat a-Nusra

Airstrikes

- Pro-Government
- U.S. / Coalition



*THIS MAP DOES NOT DEPICT AL-QAEDA CONTROL IN WESTERN SYRIA. ISW IS DEVELOPING A NEW CONTROL OF TERRAIN MAP THAT WILL ASSESS THE FULL EXTENT OF AL-QAEDA PRESENCE IN SYRIA.

*Control of Terrain Accurate as of 06 SEP 2018