

Syria Situation Report: January 23 - February 6, 2019

1 Jan 30: Pro-Opposition Residents Launch Anti-Conscription Campaign in Southern Syria:

Local residents reportedly affiliated with former opposition groups launched a campaign against conscription by pro-government forces entitled "Do Not Join the Ranks of the Criminal Army" in Daraa City in Southern Syria. At least one group of young men bearing arms reportedly marched in the Daraa al-Balad District of Daraa City in a show of strength against the Government of Syria.



2 Jan 24: Israel Conducts Rare Cross-Border Raid in Southern Syria:

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) reportedly conducted an unsuccessful raid on the Shahar Internally-Displaced Persons (IDP) Camp in the demilitarized zone along the Golan Heights in Southern Syria. The IDF reportedly engaged in a firefight with unknown militants before departing the camp. Local activists disagreed on whether the militants were affiliated with the Syrian Arab Army (SAA) or Lebanese Hezbollah.



3 Jan 24: Unknown Group Detonates IED Near Russian Embassy in Damascus:

Unidentified militants detonated an IED across the street from the Russian Embassy in Damascus. There are no reports of casualties and no group has yet claimed responsibility for the attack. The blast occurred one day after the arrival of the new Russian Ambassador to Syria Alexander Yefimov on January 23.



4 Jan 28 - 30: HTS Attempts to Consolidate Control Over Key Town in Southern Idlib Province:

Syrian Al Qaeda affiliate Hay'at Tahrir a-Sham (HTS) seized the local bank and museum in the key opposition-held town of Ma'arat a-Numan in Southern Idlib Province on January 28. HTS withdrew as part of a deal with local elders on January 29. HTS later seized an office of the private International Rescue University in Ma'arat a-Numan on January 30 after its students protested against HTS and the Syrian Salvation Government (SSG).



5 Jan 29: Female Suicide Bomber Targets Al Qaeda-Affiliated Governance Headquarters in Idlib Province:

A female bomber detonated an SVEST targeting the headquarters of the Syrian Salvation Government (SSG) - a governance body affiliated with Syrian Al Qaeda affiliate Hay'at Tahrir a-Sham (HTS) - in Idlib City. HTS released a statement blaming the attack on the Islamic State (IS). IS denied any involvement in the blast.



6 Jan 23 - 24: IS Likely Expanding Operations in Turkish-Controlled Northern Aleppo Province:

The Free Police backed by Turkey detained five alleged Islamic State (IS) militants in Azaz in Northern Aleppo Province on the Syrian-Turkish Border. Opposition officials claimed that the cell had conducted a series of bombings and assassinations in Al-Bab, Jarabulus, and Afrin in Northern Aleppo Province. The group reportedly traveled from Eastern Syria to Northern Aleppo Province around August 2018. Unknown militants previously conducted four bombings in Northern Aleppo Province on January 24. IS has not claimed responsibility for the blasts in Aleppo Province.



7 Jan 26: U.S. Partner Force Reportedly Detains IS Cell Linked to Manbij Suicide Attack:

The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and U.S. Anti-ISIS Coalition reportedly conducted multiple raids and detained several alleged members of the Islamic State (IS) outside Manbij in Northern Aleppo Province. The raids reportedly targeted sleeper cells linked to a suicide attack that killed four U.S. military and civilian personnel at a restaurant in Manbij on January 16.



8 Feb 4: Commander in U.S. Partner Force Defects to Pro-Government Forces in Eastern Syria:

A local Arab commander in the majority-Kurdish Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) defected to pro-government forces in Salahiyah near Deir e-Zor City in Eastern Syria. The defector reportedly departed with a vehicle holding weapons and files with unspecified information about the SDF.



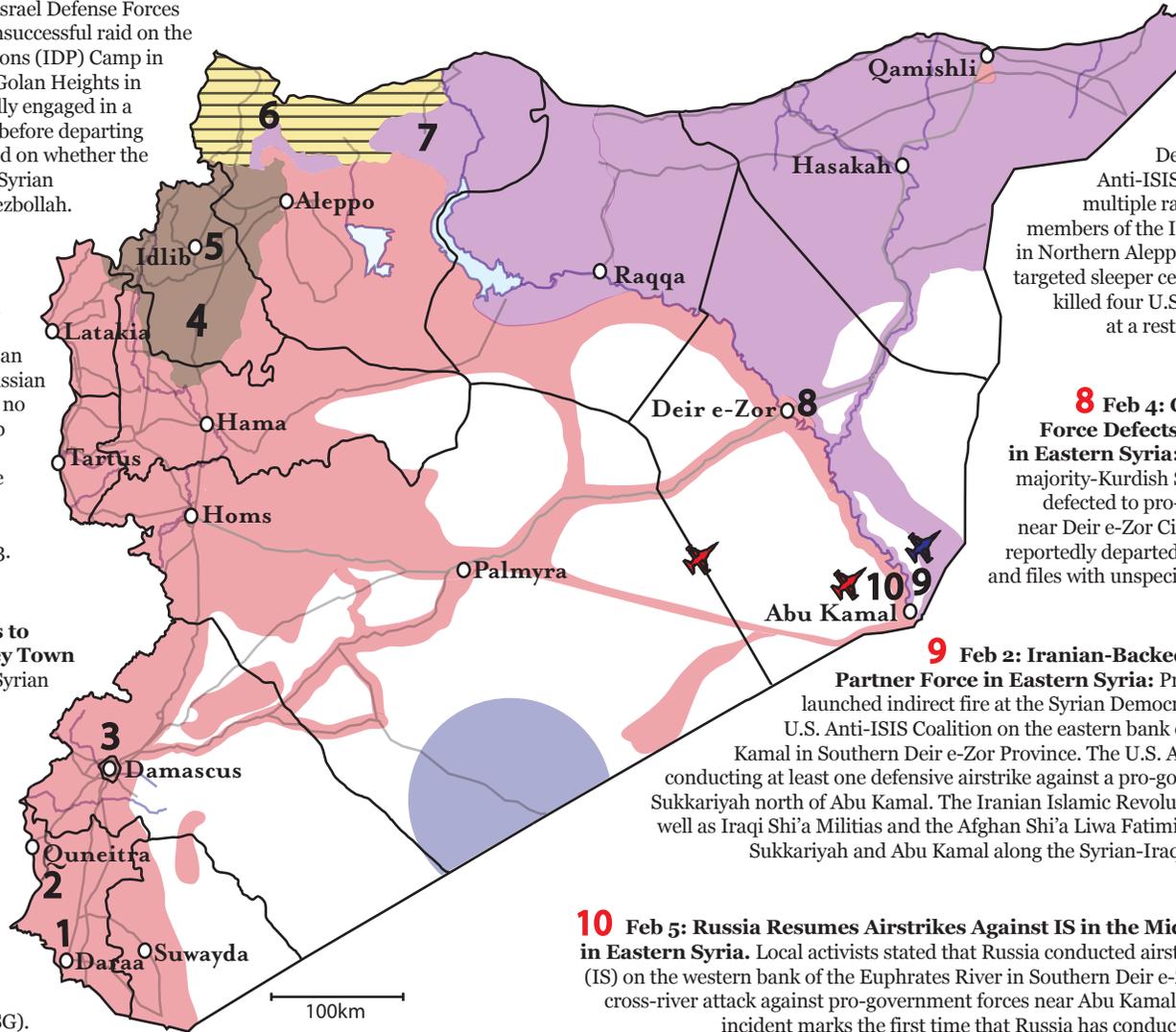
9 Feb 2: Iranian-Backed Militia Likely Targets U.S. Partner Force in Eastern Syria:

Pro-government forces reportedly launched indirect fire at the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) backed by the U.S. Anti-ISIS Coalition on the eastern bank of the Euphrates River near Abu Kamal in Southern Deir e-Zor Province. The U.S. Anti-ISIS Coalition responded by conducting at least one defensive airstrike against a pro-government artillery position near Sukkariyah north of Abu Kamal. The Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) as well as Iraqi Shi'a Militias and the Afghan Shi'a Liwa Fatimiyoun are known to operate near Sukkariyah and Abu Kamal along the Syrian-Iraqi Border in Deir e-Zor Province.



10 Feb 5: Russia Resumes Airstrikes Against IS in the Middle Euphrates River Valley in Eastern Syria:

Local activists stated that Russia conducted airstrikes targeting the Islamic State (IS) on the western bank of the Euphrates River in Southern Deir e-Zor Province after IS launched a cross-river attack against pro-government forces near Abu Kamal on the Syrian-Iraqi Border. The incident marks the first time that Russia has conducted airstrikes against cross-river operations by IS in the Middle Euphrates River Valley since at least mid-2018.



Areas of Control*

- Pro-Regime
- The Islamic State
- Kurdish Forces
- Al Qaeda-Dominated
- Turkish/Opposition Forces
- U.S. and Partner Forces

Airstrikes

- Pro-Regime
- U.S. / Coalition



*AL QAEDA-LINKED GROUPS CONTROL NEARLY ALL GOVERNANCE AND MILITARY STRUCTURES IN GREATER IDLIB PROVINCE. VARIOUS LOCAL ACTORS ASSERT LIMITED CONTROL OVER ISOLATED AREAS OF GREATER IDLIB. *Control of Terrain Accurate as of 07 FEB 2019