

Syria Situation Report: July 9 - July 15, 2016

1 July 13: Opposition groups start anti-regime offensive in Southern Syria. Several opposition groups within the Free Syrian Army (FSA)-affiliated Southern Front announced the Battle of 'Hiya Lilah' targeting pro-regime positions in Daraa Province. The statement follows increased pressure from prominent activists and religious officials calling for a renewal of military operations in response to recent gains by pro-regime forces in the Eastern and Western Ghouta Suburbs of Damascus.

2 July 11: Regime advances in Darayya. Pro-regime forces advanced into several districts of the opposition stronghold of Darayya in the Western Ghouta Suburbs of Damascus. Darayya has been under siege since 2012 and serves as a major symbol of opposition resistance to the regime.

3 July 9 - 12: Regime extends nationwide 'regime of calm' for Eid al-Fitr. The Syrian Arab Army extended a three-day nationwide 'regime of calm' that first began on July 6 in honor of Eid al-Fitr. The two unilateral declarations extended the truce until July 15. Local activists nonetheless reported that clashes, shelling, and airstrikes continued across the country, particularly in Damascus and Aleppo City.

4 July 9: Regime forces seize key town near Damascus. Regime forces seized the town of Maydaa in the Eastern Ghouta Suburbs of Damascus following twelve days of clashes with Salafi-Jihadist group Jaysh al-Islam. Maydaa served as a waypoint for supplies entering Eastern Ghouta from Qalamoun Mountains.

5 July 10: IS detonates SVEST in opposition headquarters in Dumayr. IS detonated an SVEST in a headquarters of Salafi-Jihadist group Jaysh al-Islam in the town of Dumayr in the Eastern Qalamoun Mountains, killing at least six opposition fighters.

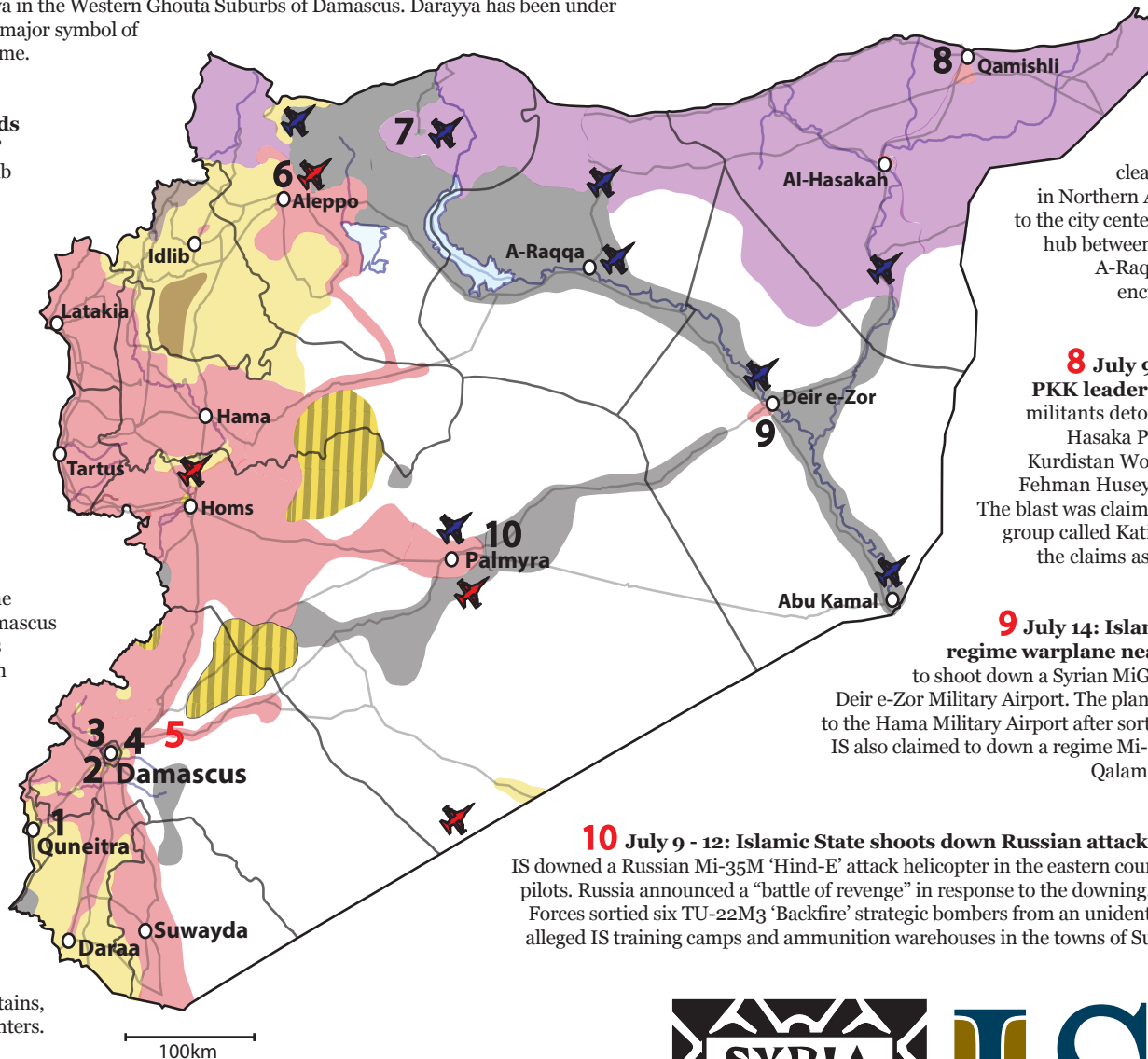
6 July 9 - 13: Pro-regime forces close main supply route into Aleppo City. On July 9, pro-regime forces established fire control over the Castello Road - the last major supply route into opposition-held districts of Aleppo City. Syrian Al-Qaeda affiliate Jabhat a-Nusra and other groups in the Jaysh al-Fatah Operations Room mounted several failed attempts to reopen the Castello Road but withdrew in the face of heavy air and artillery strikes. Meanwhile, the Fatah Halab Operations Room launched an offensive against regime positions in the Old City of Aleppo on July 11 but failed to secure any meaningful gains.

7 July 9-10: Syrian Democratic Forces clear 25% of Manbij. The U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) have cleared up to one-quarter of Manbij in Northern Aleppo Province after advancing to the city center. Manbij served as a key transit hub between the Syrian-Turkish Border and A-Raqqa City. The SDF completed the encirclement of Manbij on June 10.

8 July 9: IED allegedly kills senior PKK leader near Qamishli. Unidentified militants detonated an IED near Qamishli, in Hasaka Province, allegedly killing senior Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) commander Fehman Huseyin and eight of his bodyguards. The blast was claimed by a little-known opposition group called Katiba Tel Hamis. The PKK denied the claims as propaganda spread by Turkey.

9 July 14: Islamic State claims downing of regime warplane near Deir e-Zor City. IS claimed to shoot down a Syrian MiG-21 'Fishbed' fighter jet near the Deir e-Zor Military Airport. The plane had reportedly been returning to the Hama Military Airport after sorties against IS. On the same day, IS also claimed to down a regime Mi-8 'Hip' helicopter in the Eastern Qalamoun Mountains near Damascus.

10 July 9 - 12: Islamic State shoots down Russian attack helicopter east of Palmyra. IS downed a Russian Mi-35M 'Hind-E' attack helicopter in the eastern countryside of Palmyra, killing both pilots. Russia announced a "battle of revenge" in response to the downing. On July 12, the Russian Armed Forces sortied six TU-22M3 'Backfire' strategic bombers from an unidentified airfield in Russia targeting alleged IS training camps and ammunition warehouses in the towns of Sukhna and Arak east of Palmyra.



Areas of Control*

- Pro-Regime Forces
- Kurdish Forces
- The Islamic State
- Opposition Forces
- Jabhat a-Nusra
- Mixed Control

Airstrikes

- Pro-Regime
- U.S. / Coalition

*Control of Terrain accurate as of 13 JUL 2016



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