

# Syria Situation Report: October 13 - October 20, 2016

**1 October 19: Emir of IS-Linked Group Allegedly Assassinated in Dera'a Province:** Jabhat Fatah a-Sham - the successor of Syrian Al-Qaeda affiliate Jabhat a-Nusra - allegedly detonated a roadside IED in Western Daraa Province targeting Abu Hashem al-Idlibi, the emir of IS-affiliated Jaysh Khalid Ibn al-Walid. Activist sources claimed that the blast successfully killed the emir.

**2 October 19: Opposition Forces Evacuate Besieged Town of Moadamiyeh in Damascus:** Over 1600 individuals including at least 700 opposition fighters evacuated from the besieged town of Moadamiyeh in the Western Ghouta Suburbs of Damascus Province to Idlib Province as part of a reconciliation deal reached with the regime. The deal marks the fourth such evacuation agreement reached in Damascus over the past two months.

**3 October 13 - 14: Opposition Forces Evacuate Two Towns Outside Damascus:** Roughly 2500 individuals including more than 600 opposition fighters evacuated the towns of Qudsaya and Al-Hamah near Damascus to Idlib Province under a reconciliation deal reached with the regime. The agreement comes after pro-regime forces threatened to launch a full-scale military assault against the two towns.

**4 October 18: Syria Suffers Temporary Internet Outage Amidst Suspicious Russian Activity:** Syria Telecom stated that "unexpected" damage to an undersea telecommunications cable in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea will lead to internet outages across several provinces between October 19 - 28. The outage coincides with the presence of the Russian Research Vessel 'Yantar' off the coast of Tartus Province, according to online marine vessel trackers. Anonymous U.S. officials have described the vessel as a 'spy ship' equipped with two remote submarines capable of tampering with undersea cables.

**5 October 17: Alleged Drone Strike Targets Jabhat Fatah a-Sham Official in Idlib City.** An alleged coalition drone strike killed an unidentified leader in Jabhat Fatah a-Sham - the successor of Syrian Al-Qaeda affiliate Jabhat a-Nusra - after targeting his vehicle near the Ariha Roundabout in Idlib City. The U.S. Department of Defense has not yet claimed the attack.

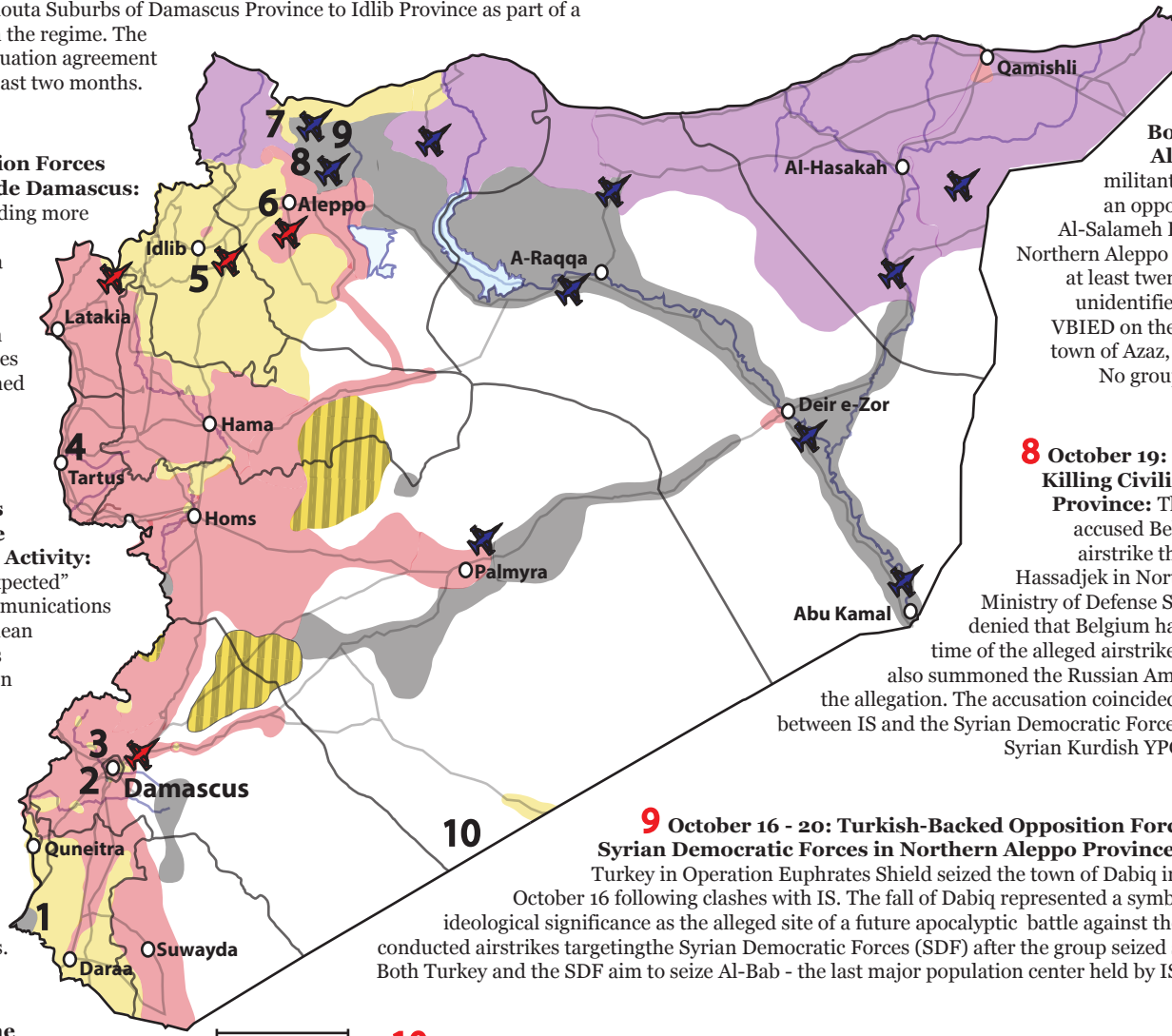
**6 October 18 - 20: Russia Announces 'Humanitarian Pauses' in Aleppo City:** Russia announced a temporary halt to pro-regime airstrikes in Aleppo City in advance of a series of daily eleven-hour-long 'humanitarian pauses' scheduled to occur on October 20 - 22. Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu stated that Russia will use the truce to "guarantee the safe exit of civilians" and opposition fighters from Eastern Aleppo City to Idlib Province as well as the delivery of humanitarian aid to residents. Activists confirmed a halt to airstrikes within Aleppo City but noted that clashes between pro-regime and opposition forces continue throughout the city.

**7 October 13 - 20: Unidentified Militants Detonate VBIEDs at Key Border Crossing in Northern Aleppo Province:** Unidentified militants detonated a VBIED targeting an opposition checkpoint near the Bab Al-Salameh Border Crossing with Turkey in Northern Aleppo Province on October 13, killing at least twenty individuals. On October 20, unidentified militants detonated a second VBIED on the outskirts of the nearby border town of Azaz, killing at least two individuals. No group has yet claimed either attack.

**8 October 19: Russia Accuses Belgium of Killing Civilians in Airstrikes in Aleppo Province:** The Russian Ministry of Defense accused Belgium of conducting a coalition airstrike that killed at least six civilians in Hassadjek in Northern Aleppo Province. Belgian Ministry of Defense Spokesperson Laurence Mortier denied that Belgium had been active in the area at the time of the alleged airstrike. The Belgian Foreign Ministry also summoned the Russian Ambassador to Belgium to protest the allegation. The accusation coincided with heavy clashes in the area between IS and the Syrian Democratic Forces - a coalition that includes the Syrian Kurdish YPG and allied opposition groups.

**9 October 16 - 20: Turkish-Backed Opposition Forces Seize Dabiq, Clash with Syrian Democratic Forces in Northern Aleppo Province:** Opposition groups backed by Turkey in Operation Euphrates Shield seized the town of Dabiq in Northern Aleppo Province on October 16 following clashes with IS. The fall of Dabiq represented a symbolic loss to the group due to its ideological significance as the alleged site of a future apocalyptic battle against the West. On October 20, Turkey conducted airstrikes targeting the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) after the group seized several villages south of Dabiq. Both Turkey and the SDF aim to seize Al-Bab - the last major population center held by IS in Northern Aleppo Province.

**10 October 16: SVBIED Detonates Near IDP Camp on Syrian-Jordanian Border:** A suspected IS member detonated an SVBIED targeting an outpost belonging to U.S.- and Jordanian-backed opposition group Jaysh al-Asha'er near the Rukban IDP Camp along the Syrian-Jordanian Border, killing at least three individuals. IS previously targeted a border post near Rukban IDP Camp with an SVBIED in June 2016, killing at least six Jordanian Armed Forces soldiers.



## Areas of Control\*

- Pro-Regime Forces
- The Islamic State
- Kurdish Forces
- Opposition Forces
- Mixed Control
- Jabhat Fatah a-Sham  
\*Formerly Jabhat a-Nusra

## Airstrikes

- ✈ Pro-Regime
- ✈ U.S. / Coalition

\*Control of Terrain Accurate as of 11 OCT 2016



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