



Weekly Conflict Summary June 16-22, 2016

Conflict events from June 16-22, 2016 were once again focused primarily in the governorate of Aleppo, as nearly 50% of all recorded incidents took place within the territory. Aerial bombardments made up about half of recorded conflict events, continuing a trend of high rates of air raids throughout Syria.

A counterattack on Menbij by the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has led to significant human losses among Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). Attacks of the sort have been fairly constant since the SDF encircled ISIS forces the city two weeks ago. SDF fighters were able to repel the majority of the counterattacks but suffered minor territorial losses. Several villages around Menbij have changed hands in the past week, but the SDF has maintained a steady grasp overall.

If captured, Menbij will be the most populous city captured by the SDF from ISIS to date.ⁱ As the SDF and the International Coalition plan to siege the city, concerns mount over the safety of the up to 65,000 remaining citizens.ⁱⁱ Casualties from aerial and mortar bombardment as well as death from lack of food and medical supplies may become an issue in the coming weeks.

All recorded barrel bombings from the past week occurred in Aleppo and Damascus/Rural Damascus. The overwhelming majority of these bombings happened in the city of Aleppo and the city of Darayya in Rural Damascus. Figure 1 (below) shows that the highest concentration of barrel bombing in Aleppo occurred in the neighborhoods between Kallasa and Hanano in eastern Aleppo city, though the bulk of all recorded events is still concentrated in northern Aleppo and along Castello Road, which serves as the last opposition-controlled route into the city.



Figure 1: Heat map showing frequency of recorded barrel bombs in Aleppo from June 16-22, 2016.

The continued use of cluster and incendiary munitions remains a worrying trend in Syria. On June 20 multiple areas were hit by sorties around Hureitan including the towns of Anadan, Hureitan, Kafr Hamra, Kallasa, Castello Road, Khan Touman, Leiramoun, -Artiq, Tal Msebin, and Yaqid Adas. These targets were hit in close succession, and many target areas among these eleven indicate the use of cluster munitions.

Battles for villages south of Aleppo city continue between opposition fighters (including Jabhat al-Nusra) against government forces, pro-government militiamen, and Hezbollah fighters, with heavy casualties reported.

