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There was a decrease in armed clashes between Government of Syria (GoS) armed

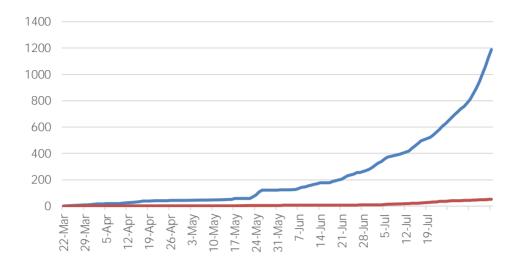
Jabal al-Zawiya area, Idlib Governorate.<sup>12</sup> On 8 August, armed opposition groups deployed additional forces to the Jabal al-Zawiya area, Idlib Governorate.<sup>13</sup> On 9 August, Turkish armed forces established a new military outpost near Al-Haddadah Hill, northern Lattakia Governorate.<sup>14</sup> The new outpost came after clashes between GoS armed forces and armed opposition groups in the area.<sup>15</sup> Observers are concerned that the military buildup signals the collapse of the 5 March ceasefire.<sup>16</sup>

On 9 August, Turkey established a unified command center to coordinate its military operations in Syria. <sup>17</sup> This followed a 23 July decision by Turkish President Recep Erdogan to set up a new military center to oversee the country's operations in Syria. The center is reportedly based in Hatay province in Turkey, which borders Syria. <sup>18</sup>

COVID-19 cases increased in northwest Syria. On 5 August, the HTS-dominated Salvation Government removed the quarantine on Sarmin town, Idlib Governorate, after the recovery of its COVID-19 infected patients. The town had been under quarantine since 25 July. 19 On 9 August, doctors reported two new cases in Bab al-Salama in Turkish-held territory. As of 9 August, there were 45 COVID-19 cases in northwest Syria. 20

On 4 August, authorities in Dara'a Governorate implemented new measures to stop the spread of COVID-19.<sup>21</sup> The new measures came after the director of a hospital in Izraa contracted the virus. On 7 August, it was reported that a GoS's Palestinian Liberation Army general died from COVID-19.<sup>22</sup> To date, there are 1,188 reported COVID-19 cases in GoS-controlled territory (see figure 2).<sup>23</sup> However, observers believe that COVID-19 infection numbers throughout Syria are significantly higher than what is officially reported.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>12</sup> https://www.hawarnews.com/en/haber/turkish-reinforcements-enter-jabal-al-



Attacks against GoS soldiers and former opposition fighters decreased during the reporting period in Dara'a Governorate. On 4 August, unidentified gunmen killed an alleged GoS informant in Tafas, Dara'a Governorate. The same day, GoS armed forces deployed military reinforcements to Harra city, Dara'a Governorate, due to the security situation. On 7 August, unidentified gunmen killed a GoS air force intelligence officer near Jilin, western Dara'a Governorate. On 8 August, unidentified gunmen injured a former opposition fighter in Ankhel city, Dara'a Governorate.

On 5 August, ISIS launched an attack on GoS armed forces in the Badia desert region of Homs Governorate. <sup>29</sup> The attack coincided with attacks in Hama Governorate (see above). ISIS attacks have been concentrated in the Badia desert region in Homs Governorate, with 42 conflict events involving ISIS since 1 June 2019.

On 3 August, the Israeli air force struck GoS armed forces targets in Quneitra city, Quneitra Governorate. The airstrikes followed an attempted IED attack on Israeli targets in Israeli-occupied Golan Heights.<sup>30</sup> GoS armed forces said that the attack

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> https://www.syriahr.com/en/178130/

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> https://www.syriahr.com/en/178123/

<sup>27</sup> https://www.syriahr.com/en/178499/

<sup>28</sup> https://www.syriahr.com/en/178768/

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> https://www.almasdarnews.com/article/isis-launches-big-attack-against-syrian-army-incentral-syria/

 $<sup>^{30}\,\</sup>underline{\text{https://www.dw.com/en/israel-launches-airstrikes-on-syrian-posts-hours-after-border-attack/a-54426134}$