

## WHOLE OF SYRIA SUMMARY

- x NORTHWEST | Government forces began advances in the southwest corner of the Hayyat Tahrir ash Sham (HTS) ominated Idleb pocket this week. Elsewhere, government troops have been deployed to the Tall Rifaat area, a week after an increase in conflict there.
- x SOUTH & CENTRAL | Low-level attacks against governmentaligned personnel continued in the south while in As Sweida & vernorate, two protests were held over the ongoing fuel crisis. In the capital, an explosive device was detonated in the Midan area.
- x NORTHEAST |Small arms and explosive attacks against military actors continued along the EuphratesRiver valley this week. Protests occurred in communities between Deir Ez Zor City and Baghuz villager a third consecutive week

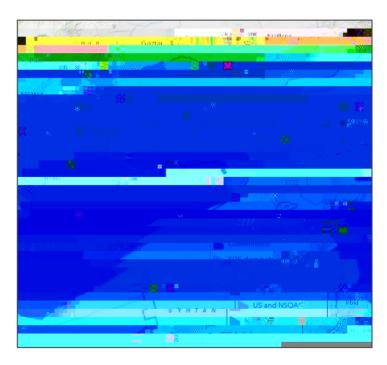


Figure 1: Dominant Actors' Area of Control and Influence in Syria as d 2019. NSOAG stands for NoFor more explanation on our mapping, please see the footnote on page 2.

## NORTHWEST SYRA

Following early indications of government action in the northwest in previous weeks, this week saw the beginning of government advances into the Hayyat Tahrir ash Sham (HTS)dominated Idleb pocket. In conjunction with high levels of aerial and ground bombardments (400 eventsthis week), government and aligned forces<sup>2</sup> broke through frontlines at Tal Uthman hill, north of Suqlabiyah town Government forces then advanced on the opposition hub of Kafr Nabudah town, to the east, taking it on May (Figure 3).

Figure 2 Government (blue) and NSOA(Ced) activity in the northwest of Syria in 2019.

HTS and other opposition groups withdrew from villages around Madiq Castle, allowing the government to regain controlof the southwest cornerof the enclave by 10 May.By the end of the week, governmentorces had also captured Shar'ah and Msheirah Shamaliahtowns. At the time of writing, government activity was focused ontwo fronts, northwards along the Shahshabu mountain rangletat leads to Jebal Zawiyah and eastwards, towards Habit town on the Khan Sheikhoun axis (Figure 3).

Despite the lossof territory, HTS and other opposition groups continued their shelling campaign on government dominated areas. This week saw aimcreasein this activity compared to previous weeks, with at least 13 bombardments impacting the towns of Jeb al Ahmar, Maghir, Karim, Braideel, Sheikh Hadid, Sckkariyah, Sifafiyeh, Hiyalin, Tel Sakkin as well as Aleppo City.

<sup>1</sup> Figure 1 denotes dominant actors' control and influence. Russia, Iran, Hezbollah and Iraqi militias maintain a presence in Syrian government

Figure 3 Direction of Government advanceed arrows) in northwest Syria May 2019.

Long-range Grad missiles also targeted Nayrab Airbase near Aleppo City government locations near Maghirand Suqalabiyah townsas well as toward the Russian operated Hameimim Airbase in Lattakia Governorate.

At least one HTSattack was recorded behind government lines in the TaRasho area of Lattakia Governorate on 12 May. The incident involved severasuicide attackers assaulting agovernment position and resulted in a number of casualties according to pro-government <u>sources</u>

This week's activity continued to impact the civilian population in the northwest. Large IDP movements were recorded from southern areas to northern areas the northwest. UNOCHAstated up to 180,000 people have been displaced from southern Idleb since 29 April. Further two medical facilities were taken out of service by airstrikes, while Syrian civil defence centres across opposition held northern Hama continued to be affected by the conflict.

Elsewhere in the northwest, low levels of conflict were recorded in the Tal Rifaat area,<sup>5</sup> with just three instances of shelling exchanges between the YPG and Turkish backed opposition groups. Such activity in contrast to the previous week's spike in conflict, that resulted in Turkish backed opposition groups

temporarily taking over three villages in the enclave.

Two contingents of government troops arrived in the Tal Rifaat areahis week. The first arrived on 6 May with as many as200 soldiers and armoured units stationed in Ard Ahras town, south of Tal Rifaat cityThe secondsawa contingent from the 30<sup>th</sup> division arrive to Tal Rifaat Citya day later. These were the first government troop movements to the area this year.

## SOUTHAND CENTRAL SYRIA

Low level attacksagainst government-aligned personnel and 6rmer opposition fighters in the south continued this week with four attacks recorded. Three occurred in Daraa Governorate; targeting a former Free Syrian Police commander in Daraa al Balad, a contingenof National Defence Force members on theroad from Izra to Bosra al Harir, and an Airforce Intelligence officer in Um Elmayathin

Zor and Baghuz towns. These continued to focus on SDF arrest policies, the lack of provision of basic services, the highprices of goods and the perceived unfair distribution of local oil resources, especially to government areas.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> In Tayyana, Abu Hardoub, Shiheil, Basira, Daman, and Thiban towns.