



- Israeli airstrikes kill two Iranian-backed militia commanders in Aleppo and Homs Governorates.
- Protesters denounce kidnapping gangs in As-Sweida Governorate.
- The Government of Syria and former opposition fighters agree to end the siege of Dara a city
- The U.S. conducts airstrikes against ISIS near Al-Hassakah city.

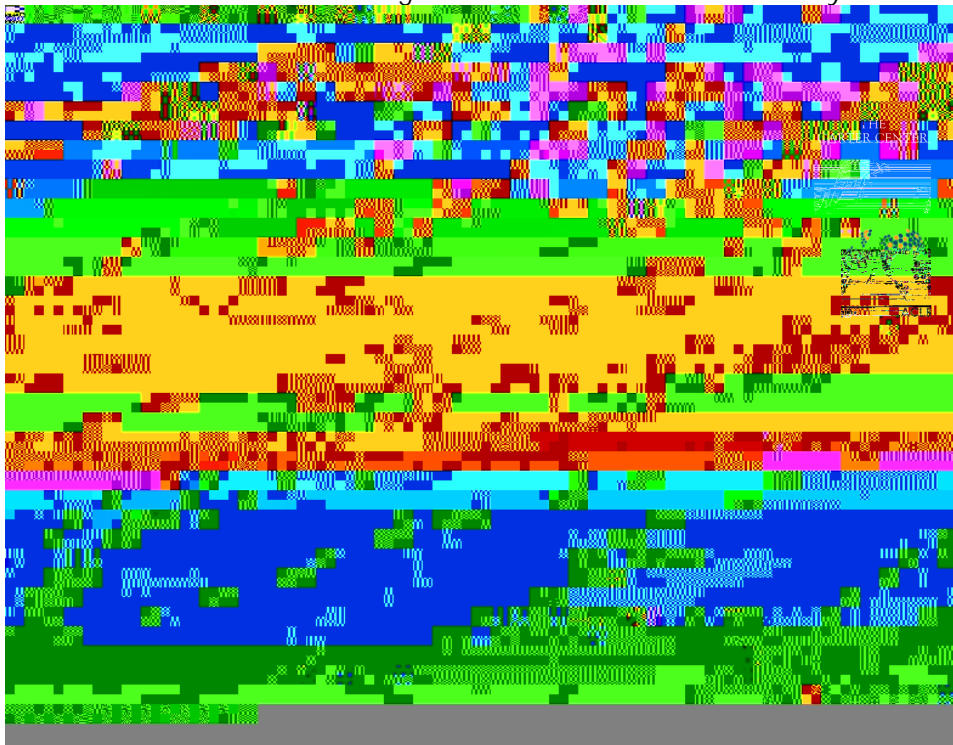


Figure 1: Dominant actors' area of control and influence in Syria as of 25 July 2021.-NSOAG stands for Non-state Organized Armed Groups. Also, please see footnote 1.

*Figure 2: Israeli airstrikes in Syria since 1 January 2021. Data from The Carter Center and ACLED.*

Israel conducts airstrikes frequently across Syria against Iranian and Government of Syria (GoS) targets, but rarely comments on its attacks.<sup>23</sup> In 2021, the pace of Israeli airstrikes has increased.

Israel conducted airstrikes against Iranian-backed militias near As-Safira, Aleppo Governorate.<sup>4</sup> The commander of the Iranian-backed Afghan Fatemiyoun Brigade was reportedly killed in the airstrikes.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Figure depicts areas of the dominant actors' control and influence. While control is a relative term in a complex, dynamic conflict, territorial control is defined as an entity having power over use of force as well as civil/administrative functions in an area. Russia, Iran, and Hezbollah

Israel conducted missile strikes against GoS and Hezbollah in Al-Qusayr, Homs Governorate, killing a senior Hezbollah commander.<sup>6</sup> Russian armed forces announced that their air defense system intercepted most of the Israeli missiles.<sup>7</sup>

*Figure 3: Protests and clashes against kidnapping gangs in As-Sweida Governorate between 19-25 July 2021. Data from The Carter Center and ACLED.*

Kidnapping gangs continue to remain a serious challenge in As-Sweida Governorate. Occasionally, these kidnappings cause major clashes between armed groups and tensions with authorities in Dara a Governorate. Local residents have accused GoS military branches of turning a blind eye to the kidnapping gangs, and even supporting them.<sup>8</sup> On 17 July, a family in Shabha clashed with a prominent kidnapping gang leader in Shabha, As-Sweida Governorate.<sup>9</sup> The family lost three members in the clashes.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.thenationalnews.com/mena/lebanon/2021/07/25/senior-hezbollah-member>

Residents of Shahba held a demonstration protesting against the prevalence of kidnapping gangs.<sup>10</sup> The protesters also accused the GoS of supporting the various kidnapping and narcotics-

*Figure 4: Conflict events involving ISIS in northeast Syria between 19-25 July 2021. Data from The Carter Center and ACLED.*

ISIS continued to be active in the Badia desert region of central and northeast Syria. ISIS has launched high-casualty attacks against the GoS armed forces and its allies. Multiple operations against ISIS have had limited success. Operations by the predominantly Kurdish Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) have exacerbated tensions with Arab tribes in territories under their control.

The SDF arrested an ISIS smuggling network in Al-Hol camp, Al-Hassakah Governorate.

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