

WEEKLY CONFLICT SUMMARY | 27 JANUARY – 2 FEBRUARY 2020

WHOLE OF SYRIA SUMMARY

- **NORTHWEST** | Government of Syria (GoS) forces advanced in southern Idleb and Western Aleppo Governorates, reaching Saraqeb City by the end of the week. Hayyat Tahrir al Sham (HTS) and other opposition activity against GoS continued to increase, with a spike in armed clashes and suicide attacks. There was also an uptick in conflict in the Tal Rifaat pocket.
- **SOUTH & CENTRAL** | Attacks against GoS-aligned personnel continued this week, including an increase in improvised explosive device (IED) activity in southern Syria. In Quneitra, there was an attack against an Intelligence Officer near Hamdiyah, which was only the eighth attack against a GoS-aligned individual in the governorate in two and a half years. In Sayda, the body of a kidnapped Jordanian national was found.
- **NORTHEAST** | Turkish-backed groups made limited advances in areas southwest of Tal Abiad this week, the first advances since November. Attacks against SDF and aligned personnel continued along the Euphrates and Khabour River Valleys.

NORTHWEST SYRIA

GoS made further advances against HTS/opposition areas in Idlib this week. GoS captured Maraat al Numaan, before moving south and north along the M5 Highway. By the end of the reporting period, GoS forces had reached the M4 highway west of Saraqeb City. At the time of writing, GoS momentum had turned eastwards toward Saraqeb city.²

GoS forces also advanced in areas southwest of Aleppo City. Initially breaching frontlines in the Rashadeen 5 suburb, GoS forces advanced to the south and captured territory to Khalsa Village, 15km south of Aleppo City.³ ACLED data indicate that Iranian-backed groups were involved in the fighting (Figure 2.

Figure 2: GoS Advances in Northwest Syria in 2020. Data from ACLED and The Carter Center.

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NORTHEAST SYRIA

Turkish-backed groups made limited advances in areas southwest of Tal Abiad this week. The opposition-aligned Syrian National Army captured Al Mardoud village by 1 February after brief clashes with the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). The advances represent the first since the slowdown in Operation Peace Spring at the end of November 2019. Shelling and armed exchanges between Turkish-backed groups and the SDF continued, focusing on Abu Rasin (x5) and Ariba abu Jarada (x2) amongst other areas.⁷

For the third consecutive week, attacks targeted critical infrastructure in northeast Syria. In Jdied Ekeidat k.con00000882870.000008867 0 595.08 84,4(n)-81(Jdie)8(d)5(

