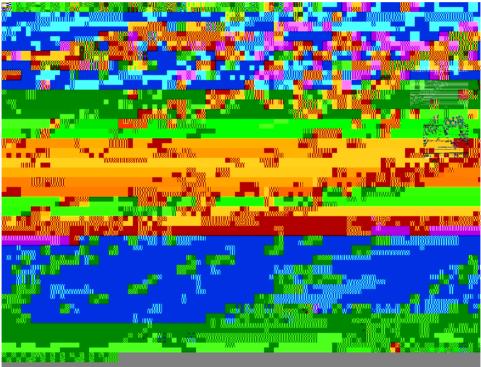


- Israel launched airstrikes against Iranian-backed militias in Lattakia and Hama Governorates.
- Tensions escalated following and As-Sweida Governorates.
- The predominantly Kurdish Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and U.S. armed forces launched a new anti-ISIS security campaign in northern Deirez-Zor Governorate.



Israel regularly conducts airstrikes across Syria against Iranian and Government of Syria (GoS) targets, but rarely comments on its attacks.²³ In 2021, the pace of Israeli airstrikes has increased, particularly in cities near the Syria-Iraq border and Deir-ez-Zor Governorate.

Israel launched airstrikes against Iranian-backed militia facilities in Al-Haffa, Lattakia Governorate and Masyaf, western Hama Governorate.⁴⁵ Pro-GoS news reports claimed that the airstrikes hit a plastics factory, killing a civilian.⁶

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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 maintain a presence in Syrian government-controlled territory. Non-state organized armed groups (NSOAG), including the Kurdish-dominated SDF and Turkish-backed opposition groups operate in areas not under GoS control. The area along the junction of the Syrian border with Iraq and Jordan is a 55km de-confliction zone, established by the US-led coalition that also includes a number of aligned local armed groups. Patrols are also depicted in the map to show the presence of actors that may have influence in an area. This is particularly relevant as US and Russian forces regularly patrol towns and routes in the northeast. While they do not control local administration or local forces, there is an assumption of a high degree of coordination with local de facto authorities. Data collected is by the publicly available project <u>ACLED</u>.

² Iranian-backed militias refers to armed groups that are supported by Iran, like Hezbollah, and

An Israeli helicopter reportedly launched missiles against multiple GoS armed forces sites in Quneitra Governorate.⁷ News reports did not provide more detailed location of the strikes.⁸

Kidnappings remain a challenge in As-Sweida Governorate. Occasionally, these kidnappings cause major clashes between armed groups. On March 2020⁹ and September 2020,¹⁰

from As-

accused GoS security branches of turning a blind eye to the armed groups committing the kidnappings, and even supporting them.¹¹

-based armed group abducted a resident of Sami, As-Sweida Governorate.¹² Following accusations that the kidnappers were from Nahta and Alabducting construction workers and residents from Nahta, Hrak, and Eastern

⁷ <u>https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/480217</u>

⁸ <u>https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-said-to-carry-out-airstrikes-in-syria-for-second-straight-night/</u>

⁹ <u>https://www.com/stercenter.org/resources/pdfs/peace/conflict_resolution/syria-</u>conflict/weekly-conflict-summary-23to29-march2020.pdf,

